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An Experimental Study of the Effects of Religiosity, Social Attitudes, and Self-Esteem on the Reception of Homiletical Fear Appeals.

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AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF
RELIGIOSITY, SOCIAL ATTITUDES, AND SELF-ESTEEM
ON THE RECEPTION OF HOMILETICAL FEAR APPEALS.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural
and Mechanical College, Ph.D., 1974
Speech

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AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY
OF THE EFFECTS OF RELIGIOSITY, SOCIAL ATTITUDES, AND SELF-ESTEEM
ON THE RECEPTION OF HOMILETICAL FEAR APPEALS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by
Kenneth R. Durham, Jr.
B.A., David Lipscomb College, 1970
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1972
May, 1974

EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of certain attitude characteristics -- religiosity, social attitudes, and self-esteem -- on the reception of homiletical fear appeals (i.e., the association of an undesirable practice with negative consequences in the context of a religious message). The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. a. Listener attitudes toward religious issues, social issues, and self, have no significant effect on or relationship to the subjective evaluation of a high- or low-fear appeal homiletical message.
- b. Listener attitudes toward religious issues, social issues, and self, have no significant effect on or relationship to information retention from a high- or low-fear appeal homiletical message.
2. a. There is no significant difference in listeners' subjective evaluation of a homiletical message using high fear appeals and a homiletical message using low fear appeals.
- b. There is no significant difference in listeners' information retention from a homiletical message using high fear appeals and homiletical message using low fear appeals.

The factorial design of the experiment was 2×2 : the independent variables considered were two levels of fear appeal messages (high-fear message and low-fear message) and two levels of sex of listener (male and female). The treatment messages described conditions of unrest and disorder in America related to three problem areas -- crime, standards of morality, and racism -- and proposed that a return to Christian principles and an increased dependence upon God would help to alleviate such conditions. Both messages contained the same basic content and were recorded on tape by the same speaker; they differed essentially only in level of fear appeal.

The subjects for this study were 114 students drawn from eight speech classes at Louisiana State University. Two weeks prior to the administration of the experimental treatment, the subjects were given a questionnaire to determine their attitudes and views on religious issues, social issues, and themselves. The pretest questionnaire consisted of 94 Likert-type items. The treatment messages were each played to four speech classes; each class was randomly assigned to hear either the high- or low-fear message. Immediately after hearing the message, each subject completed a posttest questionnaire consisting of twelve Likert scale items to measure his general subjective evaluation of the message, fifteen sentence completion blanks to measure information retention, and an additional question to allow for the expression of any likes or dislikes regarding the message.

Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions seem to be justified. (1) A homiletical message using high fear appeals may be evaluated more favorably by listeners than one using low fear appeals. (2) Neither high fear nor low fear seems to be superior in terms of eliciting information retention from a homiletical message; however, male listeners may be more retentive overall than females, and especially more retentive from a low fear message. (3) The more religious an individual tends to be, the more likely it is that he or she will positively evaluate a homiletical message. (4) The more religious an individual tends to be, the more socially conservative he or she will tend to be.

I. INTRODUCTION

Importance of the Study

"Fear", wrote Aristotle in Book II of The Rhetoric, "may be defined as a pain or disturbance arising from a mental image of impending evil of a destructive or painful sort."¹ The persuasive speaker may at times see fit to arouse fear within his listeners, he went on to say, and "when it is desirable that the audience should fear, the speaker must bring them into the right frame of mind so that they shall take themselves to be the kind of people who are likely to suffer."² Cicero was later to write in De Oratore:

. . . nothing in oratory . . . is more important than to win for the orator the favour of his hearer, and to have the latter so affected as to be swayed by something resembling a mental impulse or emotion, rather than by judgement or deliberation. For men decide far more problems by hate, or love, or lust, or rage, or sorrow, or joy, or hope, or fear, or illusion, or some other inward emotion, than by reality, or authority, or any legal standard, or judicial precedent, or statute.³

Less than eighty years after Cicero's death, a Palestinian Jew named Simon Bar-Jonah, or Peter, stood before a large Jerusalem audience and delivered the first recorded sermon by a follower of Jesus of Nazareth.⁴ Over the past nineteen centuries Christian orators have

¹Aristotle, The Rhetoric of Aristotle, trans. Lane Cooper (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932), p. 107.

²Ibid., p. 110.

³Cicero, De Oratore, II, xlii, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 325.

⁴Acts 2: 1-42.

proclaimed the central tenets of their faith, appealing often to their hearers' emotions and sometimes to their fears.

The use of fear appeals in American preaching can best be examined by briefly tracing the development of Protestant revivalism in this country. Revivalism refers to a specific type of evangelism characterized by mass meetings, often held outside church edifices, with sermons addressed primarily to persons who do not belong to a church.⁵ The extensive use of fear arousal in such meetings first appeared during what religious historians have called the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century. George Whitefield from Britain and Jonathan Edwards from New England pioneered an emotional religious rhetoric counter to the impersonal, logical sermons characteristic of the legalistic Calvinists. Edwards confronted his audiences with the ominous picture of an "angry God" dangling depraved sinners over a great furnace of wrath, "much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire. . . ." The reactions to his sermons were reported to range from sobs to hysteria.⁷

Revivalism moved westward around the turn of the nineteenth century in the form of the camp meeting, the most spectacular of which

⁵Rollin W. Quimby and Robert H. Billigmeier, "The Varying Role of Revivalistic Preaching in American Protestant Evangelism," Speech Monographs, XXVI (1959), 217.

⁶Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," A. Craig Baird, ed., American Public Addresses: 1740-1952 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956), 23.

⁷Frederick M. Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), p. 108.

was held in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801. Emotional appeals at the meetings produced the most excessive religious audience reaction of all, the "exercises": falling, jerking, rolling, dancing, barking, and other kinds of grotesque physical behavior.⁸ The camp meetings were noisy, confused affairs, but revivalism soon moved into an era of more orderly, systematic evangelism through the efforts of such preachers as Charles G. Finney. In a lecture on "What a Revival of Religion Is," Finney defended appeals to emotion as both necessitated by human nature and willed by God:

God has found it necessary to take advantage of the excitability there is in mankind, to produce powerful excitements among them, before he can lead them to obey Not that the excited feeling is religion, for it is not; but it is excited desire, appetite, and feeling that prevents religion. . . . Hence it is necessary to awaken men to a sense of guilt and danger, and thus produce an excitement of counter-feeling and desire which will break the power of carnal and worldly desire and leave the will free to obey God.⁹

Eighteen seventy-five marked the appearance of America's first truly modern revivalist, Dwight L. Moody. In an era of Victorian gentility, Moody chose to portray scenes of suffering on earth rather than in hell.¹⁰ To describe how important eternal life was and how desperately every man should seek to save himself, he

⁸William Warren Sweet, Revivalism in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945), pp. 122-24.

⁹The lecture was first published in 1835, and revised in 1868; this quotation is taken from the revised text. Charles G. Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 9-10.

¹⁰William G. McLoughlin, Jr., Modern Revivalism (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1959), p. 251.

told this exaggerated horror story of a drowning man trying to climb into an overcrowded lifeboat:

They begged him to let go, but he would not. . . . A man took a sword and cut off the man's hand, and the man swam up a second time, and he laid hold of that boat with his left hand and they cut off the left hand; and with both hands cut off he swam up to that boat and seized it with his teeth. It touched their hearts. They could not cut his head off and they drew him into the boat.¹¹

It was not until the early 1900's that a significant number of Americans began to question the legitimacy of the revival as an evangelistic technique. Many itinerant preachers were criticized for their crude methods, superficial theology, and overemphasis on large numbers of conversions.¹² The most theatrical revivalist of this period, perhaps of all time, was William A. "Billy" Sunday. This narrative from a prohibition sermon entitled "Booze" was typical of Sunday's brand of emotional appeal:

Several years ago in the city of Chicago a young man of good parents, good character, one Sunday crossed the street and entered a saloon, open against the law. He found there boon companions. There were laughter, song, and jest and much drinking. After awhile, drunk, insanely drunk, his money gone, he was kicked into the street. He found his way across to his mother's home. He importuned her for money to buy more drink. She refused him. He seized from the sideboard a revolver and ran out into the street and with the expressed determination of entering the saloon and getting more drink, money or no money. His fond mother followed him into the street. She put her hand upon him in a

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Quimby and Billigmeier, "Revivalistic Preaching," 218-19.

¹³William A. Sunday, "Booze", Karen Gullen, ed., Billy Sunday Speaks (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1970), p. 57.

loving restraint. He struck it from him in anger, and then his sister came and added her entreaty in vain. And then a neighbor, whom he knew, trusted and respected, came and put his hand on him in gentleness and friendly kindness, but in an insanity of drunken rage he raised the revolver and shot his friend dead in his blood upon the street. There was a trial; he was found guilty of murder. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, and when the little mother heard the verdict -- a frail little bit of a woman -- she threw up her hands and fell in a swoon. In three hours she was dead.¹³

Such practices in mass evangelism were branded as "psychological malpractice,"¹⁴ and public response to revivals fell sharply after World War I. In the period from around 1920 until 1935, the revival was not thought to be an effective evangelistic method and fell into disuse by most major religious bodies in the United States. In 1935, however, the success of the "National Preaching Mission" sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches¹⁵ to some extent helped to revive the revival.¹⁶ Since that time, the revival has found general acceptance among Protestants, though it certainly has not enjoyed the success and popularity of the nineteenth century campaigns. Today there is evidence that revivals have wide appeal both to the rural and urban lower class, and to certain elements of the middle class.¹⁷

Over the past three decades, America's leading revivalist has been W. F. "Billy" Graham. Conducting his well-engineered revival campaigns in major American cities and in foreign countries, Graham

¹⁴Davenport, Religious Revivals, p. 256.

¹⁵Now the National Council of Churches.

¹⁶Quimby and Billigmeier, "Revivalistic Preaching," 220-25.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 228.

has utilized a charismatic style which, though more sophisticated than that of his evangelistic predecessors, nonetheless employs appeals to fear. Robert Thouless has observed that since an attempt to arouse fear in the fashion of Jonathan Edwards would probably produce amusement or disgust today, Graham rather makes references to such present dangers as nuclear destruction in order to produce anxiety in his listeners.¹⁸

Homiletical fear appeals have not been the exclusive practice of the revivalists, of course. They have long been used by preachers, particularly among the conservative, fundamentalist¹⁹ churches, to stir up their home congregations. While religious persuasion is a rhetorical genre all its own, it still is concerned with "adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas."²⁰ And in communicating religious ideas the preacher should be aware of the ethical considerations involved in making such rhetorical adjustments, even though he may

¹⁸Robert Thouless, An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion (3d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 27.

¹⁹Fundamentalism is a term which was coined around 1910 to define those Christian groups who opposed the modernist and Social Gospel movements within the established denominations. The "Conservatives" withdrew from all association with "Liberals," and many of those in denominational groups left to join or form new sects. Some groups which might be included today under the fundamentalist heading include the Churches of Christ, Independent Christian Church, Assemblies of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, and some Baptist and Presbyterian churches. William G. McLoughlin, "Is There a Third Force in Christendom?" Religion in America, ed. William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 58.

²⁰Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Function and Scope," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXIX (1953), 401.

feel assured that his calling is divine and his message inspired.²¹ Brembeck and Howell raise a word of caution pertinent to the religious orator: "The zealous proponent of a good cause must continually review his methods to be sure that he is not slipping into short-cut practices he himself would condemn when used for a lesser purpose."²²

The psychology of fear appeals involves persuasion by the use of suggestion, which Thouless has defined as "a process of communication resulting in the acceptance and realization of a communicated idea in the absence of adequate rational grounds for acceptance."²³ While homiletical appeals to fear may elicit a momentary overt response (i.e., a "decision" or "conversion"), the effects of such suggestion may not necessarily be lasting or even desirable. Sweet criticized the revivalists for the transient nature of many of their converts' commitment: "They have come into the Church on the basis of an emotional experience, and when that emotional experience cools off there is little if anything left."²⁴ Some listeners apparently have been moved by such appeals, but not to conversion. William James in his classic work on the psychology of religion cites the testimony of one such individual:

²¹Perry C. Cotham, "The Ethics of Evangelistic Persuasion," Integrity, III (1972), 154-63.

²²Winston L. Brembeck and William S. Howell, Persuasion: A Means of Social Control (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 453.

²³Thouless, Psychology of Religion, p. 21. Thouless also raises the ethical question involved in the use of suggestion and anxiety-arousal. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

²⁴Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 145.

One Sabbath, I went to hear the Methodist at the Academy. He spoke of the ushering in of the day of general judgement; and he set it forth in such a solemn and terrible manner as I never heard before. . . . I trembled involuntarily on the bench where I was sitting, though I felt nothing at heart. . . . When he finished his discourse, an old gentleman turned to me and said, 'This is what I call preaching.' I thought the same; but my feelings were still unmoved by what he said, and I did not enjoy religion. . . .²⁵

The religious orator must then practically consider whether an appeal exclusively to the emotions will bring about the lasting commitment or conversion that he ostensibly seeks. In his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, Scottish belletrist and preacher Hugh Blair considered the pathetic appeal to be insufficient when used to the exclusion of understanding:

. . . if we expect any emotion which we raise to have a lasting effect, we must be careful to bring over to our side, in the first place, the understanding and judgement. . . . They [the hearers] must be able to justify to themselves the passion which they feel; and remain satisfied that they are not carried away by mere delusion. Unless their minds be brought into this state, although they may have been heated by the orator's discourse, yet, as soon as he ceases to speak, they will resume their ordinary tone of thought; and the emotion which he has raised will die entirely away.²⁶

Certainly not all contemporary religious speakers attempt to incorporate emotional appeals into their sermons. Vance Packard has noted that the presence or absence of religious emotionalism seems to be a function of the prestige level of the religious institution;

²⁵William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Mentor Books, 1958), p. 158.

²⁶James L. Golden and Edward P. J. Corbett, eds., The Rhetoric of Blair, Campbell, and Whately (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 123.

that is, as one goes up the social scale church services tend to become less emotional and evangelical, and more intellectualized and restrained.²⁷ Nonetheless, many religious scholars both liberal and conservative do feel that the exclusion of any and all fearsome content from preaching would constitute a misrepresentation of the New Testament message. Swiss theologian Jean-Jacques Von Allmen contends that "we have not the right to suppress in our sermons God's threats against those who turn away from his covenant," though he adds that "these threats should not become the chief tenor of the message with which we are charged."²⁸ Thus the question of the place of homiletical appeals to fear and other emotions is not one which is easily resolved. Thouless provided a healthy perspective on the issue when he pointed out that religion is neither purely emotional or intellectual: "It may be agreed that the intellectual factor cannot form the whole basis of religion But a religion based solely on feeling . . . can easily develop into fanaticism."²⁹

Previous communication research on the use of fear appeals is valuable to the understanding of the effects of fearsome preaching on listeners. These studies will be surveyed in some detail in Chapter II. Their findings do suggest three possible factors that may inhibit the effectiveness of a religious message using fear appeals:

²⁷Vance Packard, The Status Seekers (New York: Pocket Books, 1961), p. 180.

²⁸Jean-Jacques Von Allmen, Preaching and Congregation, trans. B. L. Nicholas (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 18.

²⁹Thouless, Psychology of Religion, p. 72.

1. Intense emotion may cause inattentiveness to certain parts of the communication.

2. Intense fear may produce an attitude of aggression toward the communicator.

3. Intense anxiety may produce a defensive-avoidance reaction.³⁰

Regarding the use of fear appeals, the Christian orator has three apparent considerations facing him -- the scriptural, the ethical, and the practical. First, does the Bible provide him sufficient precedent and instruction regarding the arousal of fear as a persuasive approach? Second, can the preacher always ethically justify the use of suggestion by fear as an evangelistic device? Finally, do fear appeals enhance or inhibit his effectiveness in terms of securing a genuine response and lasting attitude change? These are questions the religious speaker must reckon with for, as the eighteenth-century rhetorician George Campbell pointed out in The Philosophy of Rhetoric, his profession is perhaps the most delicate of all persuasive tasks:

The primary intention of preaching is the reformation of mankind. . . . Reformation of life and manners -- of all things that which is the most difficult to effectuate; I may add, of all tasks ever attempted by persuasion, that which has the most frequently baffled its power.³¹

³⁰Wayne Minnick, The Art of Persuasion (2d ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 25.

³¹Golden and Corbett, Blair, Campbell, and Whately, p. 234.

Statement of the Problem

The present study is being conducted for the purpose of investigating the effects of certain attitude characteristics -- religiosity, social attitudes, and self-esteem -- on the reception of homiletical fear appeals. Several questions about the relationships under consideration become apparent at the outset of this study:

1. Will the level of fear appeal that a religious speaker incorporates into his message affect his listeners' subjective evaluation of the message?
2. Will the level of fear appeal affect the listeners' ability to retain the content of the message?
3. Does a listener's religiosity, or his social attitudes, or his self-esteem, or any interaction of those attitudes, help to explain any differences in his subjective evaluation of a high- and low-fear religious message?
4. Does a listener's religiosity, or social attitudes, or self-esteem, or any interaction of those attitudes, help to explain any difference in the amount of information he is able to retain from a high- or low-fear religious message?

In addition, the following secondary question should be considered: Do sex differences help to account for any differences in the listeners' subjective evaluation and information retention?

Definition of Terms

In the present study, a homiletical fear appeal is defined as the association of an undesirable practice (e.g., lack of faith in God and failure to adhere to Christian principles) with negative

consequences (e.g., crime, immorality, and racism) in the context of a religious message. Religiosity describes the degree of acceptance on the part of the listener of Christian religious teachings and general positive evaluation of the Christian faith. Social attitudes provide an index of an individual's general predisposition toward social issues (e.g., federal controls on private enterprise, social change versus traditional ideas and customs) on a liberalism-conservatism continuum. Self-esteem is defined as an individual's degree of acceptance of himself as a normal, secure, worthwhile person.

Regarding the dependent variables in this study, the subjective evaluation of the message is the listener's general appraisal of the treatment; that is, did he agree with its arguments and evidence, and did he approve of the speaker's delivery of the message. Information retention is defined as the listener's ability to reproduce key names, points, and recommendations of the message.

Chapter Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter Two presents a review of significant research literature relevant to the present study. The first major section summarizes experimental studies dealing with the effects of fear appeals on information retention; studies involving different independent variables in fear arousal and their respective effects on attitude change; and different topic areas which have been investigated in fear appeal research. The second section reviews experimental findings on individual differences which could affect response to fear appeals: differences in religious attitudes, social attitudes, self-esteem, and sex.

Chapter Three outlines the procedure followed in this experimental study. First, the hypotheses to be tested are stated in null form. Methodology is then discussed in terms of the subjects involved in the study and the procedure followed in administering the experimental treatments. Following is an explanation of the measuring instruments used, and of the construction of the treatment messages.

Chapter Four first summarizes the results of the experiment. Then, the final conclusions drawn from the research are presented and discussed.

II. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Fear Appeals

Research on threat appeals has yielded conflicting findings concerning the relative effectiveness of high threat versus low threat in persuasion. . . . Few variables have been found which consistently interact with fear.¹

After over twenty years of experimentation and research, communication scientists still find it difficult to make confident predictions regarding the effects of attempted fear arousal in persuasive rhetoric. Some research has indicated that strong fear-arousing communications are more persuasive than weak,² and some that strong are less persuasive than weak.³ Janis and Feshbach⁴ in their

¹Kenneth L. Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal: Research in Threat Appeals: 1953-1968," Psychological Bulletin, LXXII (1969), 426. For another summary article on fear appeal research, see Gerald R. Miller, "Studies on the Use of Fear Appeals: A Summary and Analysis," Central States Speech Journal, XIV (1963), 117-24.

²Alan S. DeWolfe and Catherine N. Governale, "Fear and Attitude Change," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXIX (1964), 119-23; Chester A. Insko, Abe Arkoff, and Verla Insko, "Effects of High and Low Fear-Arousing Communications Upon Opinions Toward Smoking," Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, I (1965), 256-66; Howard Leventhal, Robert Singer, and Susan Jones, "Effects of Fear and Specificity of Recommendation Upon Attitudes and Behavior," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, II (1965), 20-29.

³Irving L. Janis and Seymour Feshbach, "Effects of Fear-Arousing Communications," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLVIII (1953), 78-92; Irving L. Janis and Robert F. Terwilliger, "An Experimental Study of Psychological Resistances to Fear-Arousing Communications," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXV (1962), 403-10.

⁴Janis and Feshbach, "Fear-Arousing Communications", 78-92.

pioneer 1953 study found varying degrees of fear appeal (strong, moderate, and minimal) to be equally effective in teaching factual material on the cause and prevention of tooth decay. However, the minimal appeal was found to be the most effective in producing resistance to later propaganda, implying that subjects exposed to strong and moderate appeals showed a tendency either to avoid thinking about the content of the fear-arousing communication or to minimize the importance of the communication. Their primary conclusion was that "the overall effectiveness of a persuasive communication will tend to be reduced by the use of a strong fear appeal, if it evokes a high degree of emotional tension without adequately satisfying the need for reassurance."⁵ Janis and Milholland,⁶ using the same topic of dental hygiene, found that strong and mild fear appeals produced virtually the same information scores but that the learning of their listeners was somewhat selective: the strong appeal group best remembered threatening content items, while the mild appeal group tended to recall source and explanatory items. Janis and Terwilliger⁷ obtained evidence in support of the hypothesis of defensive resistance to fear appeals. They found that a strong threat message linking smoking to cancer aroused defensive resistance to the arguments, conclusions, and recommendations of the message by the subjects, most

⁵Ibid., p. 92.

⁶Irving L. Janis and Harry Milholland, "The Influence of Threat Appeals on Selective Learning of the Content of a Persuasive Communication," Journal of Psychology, XXXVII (1954), 75-80.

⁷Janis and Terwilliger, "Psychological Resistances," 403-10.

of whom were smokers. These studies suggest that fear level affects learning in terms of the type of information retained, but not in terms of overall retention scores. They further indicate an avoidance response to high fear that can reduce its persuasive effectiveness.

Haefner⁸ designed communications on hydrogen weapons to evoke both strong fear and strong guilt: fear of nuclear war, and guilt over Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and fallout from nuclear testing. His data revealed that moderate guilt was more influential than strong guilt in changing attitudes, but moderate fear was not more influential than strong fear.

Berkowitz and Cottingham⁹ considered two additional factors to be vital in the study of strong and weak fear-arousing communications: the interest value of the weak fear appeal, and the relevance of the material in the strong fear appeal. They concluded that because a significant number of the subjects regarded the weak fear message on the use of seat belts as uninteresting, that communication was not more persuasive than the strong fear message. They also found that relevance affected the persuasiveness of the strong fear appeal, in that the subjects showed greater defensive avoidance and hence less

⁸D. P. Haefner, "Some Effects of Guilt-Arousing and Fear-Arousing Persuasive Communications on Opinion Change," Unpublished Technical Report, Office of Naval Research, Contract Number N6 onr-241, 1956 (abridgement of unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Rochester, 1956).

⁹Leonard Berkowitz and Donald Cottingham, "The Learning Interest Value and Relevance of Fear-Arousing Communications," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LX (1960), 37-43.

attitude change in response to the highly relevant message.¹⁰

However, there were no significant differences in information retention scores from strong and minimal fear appeal groups. Moltz and Thistlethwaite,¹¹ using messages with no, weak, and strong fear appeals regarding dental hygiene, similarly found no differences in information scores. A field study by Kraus, El-Assal, and DeFleur¹² designed strong and minimal fear appeal messages warning the public against watching an upcoming eclipse of the sun with the naked eye. It was demonstrated that strong fear appeals can be relatively successful in producing information retention, particularly when the appeals do not call for the listener to change habitual behavior or cherished beliefs. This finding is consistent with Berkowitz and Cottingham's high fear/low relevance message effectiveness in producing attitude change. The Kraus, et al. study found very little hostility toward the source of the high fear message, the news media. The probable reason is again the fact that the source made no demand for a significant, extended change in behavior or opinion on the part of the subjects. With the exception of the Kraus, et al. study, research points with some consistency to the conclusion that the level of fear arousal in a

¹⁰Relevance was operationally defined as high or low according to car ownership and the frequency with which the subjects rode in cars. Ibid., p. 39.

¹¹Howard Moltz and Donald Thistlethwaite, "Attitude Modification and Anxiety Reduction," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, L (1955), 231-37.

¹²Sidney Kraus, Elaine El-Assal, and Melvin DeFleur, "Threat Appeals in Mass Communication: An Apparent Contradiction," Speech Monographs, XXXII (1966), 23-29.

message does not significantly affect the amount of information retained by the listener from that message.

Counter to some of the research mentioned above, several studies bear witness to the effectiveness of strong fear appeals in facilitating attitude change on various topics. DeWolfe and Governale¹³ dealt with the fear of tuberculosis among student nurses, concluding that if a persuasive communication contains reassuring recommendations as to how the threat can be avoided, then the fear can bring about attitude change. Insko, Arkoff, and Insko¹⁴ found that strong fear appeals produced a change in opinion among non-smokers about future smoking behavior, but not in opinion about the effect of smoking on health. Rosenblatt¹⁵ discovered that a strong fear-arousing message is more effective than a weak message in convincing people that they should not have tuberculosis chest X-ray examinations. Thus these findings seem to concur with Insko, Arkoff, and Insko, that the acceptance of an avoidance recommendation can be facilitated by strong fear. Leventhal, Singer, and Jones¹⁶ determined that strong fear was more effective than low fear in producing reported intention to obtain tetanus inoculations and in increasing the perceived importance of inoculations. In an attempt to determine

¹³DeWolfe and Governale, "Fear and Attitude Change," 119-23.

¹⁴Insko, Arkoff, and Insko, "Opinions Toward Smoking," 256-66.

¹⁵P. C. Rosenblatt, "Enhancement of Persuasion by Threat," paper read at the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, April, 1965; cited by Chester A. Insko, Theories of Attitude Change (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 39-40.

¹⁶Leventhal, Singer, and Jones, "Effects of Fear," 20-29.

why strong fear is sometimes more, sometimes less effective than weak fear, Leventhal, et al. manipulated high and low specificity levels of recommendation. In this case at least, the specificity of recommendation did not interact with the levels of fear.

The topics of the communications used in fear appeals research have varied considerably, though dental hygiene and smoking have been used much more than any others. Some of the topics not mentioned above include safe driving,¹⁷ fallout shelters,¹⁸ population growth,¹⁹ mental health,²⁰ cancer,²¹ roundworms,²² grades,²³ syphilis,²⁴ army

¹⁷Edward H. Fischer, Stanley L. Cohen, Lawrence E. Schlesinger, and Richard H. Bloomer, "Some Effects of Relevant Stories Portraying Danger on Retention of Information Associated With the Stories," Journal of Social Psychology, LXXIII (1967), 75-87.

¹⁸Murray A. Hewgill and Gerald R. Miller, "Source Credibility and Response to Fear-Arousing Communications," Speech Monographs, XXXII (1965), 95-101.

¹⁹Kenneth Frandsen, "Effects of Threat Appeals and Media of Transmission," Speech Monographs, XXX (1963), 101-04.

²⁰Jun C. Nunnally and Howard M. Bobren, "Variables Governing the Willingness to Receive Communications on Mental Health," Journal of Personality, XXVII (1959), 38-46.

²¹Harry P. Gollob and James E. Dittes, "Effects of Manipulated Self-Esteem on Persuasibility Depending on Threat and Complexity of Communication," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, II (1965), 195-201.

²²Godwin C. Chu, "Fear Arousal, Efficacy, and Imminency," Journal of Personality, IV (1966), 517-24.

²³Arthur R. Cohen, "Need for Cognition and Order of Communication as Determinants of Opinion Change," The Order of Presentation in Persuasion, ed. C. I. Hovland (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), cited in Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal," 435.

²⁴J. D. Duke, "Critique of the Janis and Feshbach Study," Journal of Social Psychology, LXXII (1967), 71-80.

life,²⁵ and donating blood.²⁶ Higbee has suggested that the inconsistencies in fear appeal research findings may in part be attributable to two important dimensions that vary from topic to topic: the audience's familiarity with the topic, and the relative importance of the topic.²⁷ Insko, Arkoff, and Insko pointed to yet another topic dimension of possible significance. Their notion held that strong fear-arousing communications are more likely to arouse a defensive reaction to a punishment topic than to an avoidance topic.²⁸ This seems to help explain the finding by Durham²⁹ that religious listeners rated the source of a high fear message on the biblical topic of hell as more credible than the source of a low fear message on the same topic. Apparently no defensive reaction was aroused because they felt that their religiousness would enable them to avoid the future threat of hell. As mentioned above, the Kraus, et al. study found little hostility directed at the source of a high fear

²⁵Howard Leventhal and Sidney I. Perloe, "A Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Persuasibility," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXIV (1962), 385-88.

²⁶Fredric A. Powell and Gerald R. Miller, "Social Approval and Disapproval Cues in Anxiety-Arousing Communications," Speech Monographs, XXXIV (1967), 152-59.

²⁷Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal," 437.

²⁸A punishment message is directed at current ongoing behavior, while an avoidance message is directed at the precluding of possible future activity. Insko, Arkoff, and Insko, "Opinions Toward Smoking," 256-66.

²⁹Kenneth R. Durham, Jr., "An Experimental Study of the Effects of Homiletical Fear Appeals on Source Credibility and Information Retention" (unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1972).

message on the necessity of taking proper precautions to avoid eye damage from an upcoming eclipse. On the other hand, Janis and Feshbach indicated that listeners exposed to a strong fear appeal showed the greatest amount of subjective dislike of the communication and made more complaints about the content.³⁰ Their appeals were aimed at an ongoing activity, dental hygiene, and therefore constituted a punishment topic.

The research discussed up to this point suggests, in summary, that the influence of differing levels of fear appeals is contingent to a great extent on different factors present within the communication situation: the relevance and interest value of the topic, the nature of the change in the listener called for by the message, the reassurance provided for the listener by the message, and the topic of the message itself. One final theory posited by Higbee³¹ and others helps to reconcile some of the conflicting findings on the effects of fear appeals. It holds that there is a curvilinear, rather than a linear, relationship between fear level and persuasion; that is, the effectiveness of a persuasive message may increase as fear level increases up to a certain point, then decrease as fear level continues to increase.

Individual Differences

Moving from the consideration of how differences in the fear appeal messages affect the hearers, it is necessary at this point to

³⁰Janis and Feshbach, "Fear-Arousing Communications," 92.

³¹Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal," 439-41.

consider how differences among the listeners affect their responses to fear appeal messages, or any persuasive messages. Goldstein³² contended that personal differences are important in analyzing the effects of fear appeals. He made a basic distinction between two types of individuals: copers, who attempt to handle fear and anxiety in a nondefensive manner, and avoiders, who react in a defensive manner. He found that a strong fear appeal receives greater acceptance among copers than among avoiders, while a minimal appeal receives greater acceptance among avoiders.

Social Attitudes

Previous research has dealt little with the interaction between fear arousal and social attitudes, but some findings may be helpful in investigating this relationship. Kerpelman³³ reported that politically-left-oriented students were less concerned with social acceptance than right- or middle-oriented students. No significant differences were found in ego defensiveness. Looft³⁴ found political liberals to be desirous of an environment filled with novelty and change. In an earlier study, Kerpelman³⁵ found political conservatives

³²Michael J. Goldstein, "The Relationship Between Coping and Avoiding Behavior and Response to Fear-Arousing Propaganda," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LVIII (1959), 247-52.

³³Larry C. Kerpelman, "Student Political Activism and Ideology: Comparative Characteristics of Activists and Nonactivists," Journal of Counseling Psychology, XVI (1969), 8-13.

³⁴William R. Looft, "Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals, and Sensation-Seekers," Perceptual and Motor Skills, XXXII (1971), 98.

³⁵Larry C. Kerpelman, "Personality and Attitude Correlates of Political Candidate Preference," Journal of Social Psychology, LXXVI (1968), 219-26.

(supporters of Goldwater in 1964) to be more conventional and submissive to authority. Mann,³⁶ reviewing research on the influence of personality characteristics on small group behavior, concluded that conservative, conventional persons are more likely to yield to group pressure than radical or unconventional persons. These studies seem then to indicate that persons on either end of the social continuum are potentially persuadable, conservative individuals being more submissive to social influences and liberal individuals being characteristically amenable to change in general.

Religious Attitudes

Listeners' differing religious beliefs may also influence their responses to fear appeals. Although previous research has not significantly explored this relationship, several studies suggest some facets of the religious personality which may help to predict reaction to fear appeals. The profile of the religious believer in these studies is not always a flattering one. Goldsen, et al.,³⁷ reporting on college students, and Nash and Berger,³⁸ surveying middle-class adults, found religious individuals to be generally more suggestible

³⁶Richard D. Mann, "A Review of the Relationships Between Personality and Performance in Small Groups," Psychological Bulletin, LVI (1959), 241-70.

³⁷Rose K. Goldsen, Morris Rosenberg, Robin M. Williams, Jr., and Edward A. Suchman, What College Students Think (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1960).

³⁸Dennison Nash and Peter Berger, "The Child, the Family, and the 'Religious Revival' in Suburbia," Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion, II (1962), 85-93.

and given to social conformity. Fisher³⁹ reported that religious persons were more acquiescent than non-religious persons. Ranck⁴⁰ concluded that the more conservative religious persons are in their religious ideology, the more submissive they tend to be in face-to-face situations. Gregory⁴¹ and Martin and Nichols⁴² found religious belief to correlate positively with the California F scale for authoritarianism. Religiosity correlated positively and significantly with dogmatism in a study by Swindell and L'Abate.⁴³ Brown and Lowe⁴⁴ reported that in their study non-believers were superior in intelligence to both believers and Bible college students; non-believers were also significantly more liberal politically.

Religious persons have not always demonstrated negative attributes and attitudes, however. Brown and Lowe⁴⁵ found that

³⁹Seymour Fisher, "Acquiescence and Religiosity," Psychological Reports, XV (1964), 784.

⁴⁰James G. Ranck, "Religious Conservatism-Liberalism and Mental Health," Pastoral Psychology, XII (1961), 34-40.

⁴¹W. Edgar Gregory, "The Orthodoxy of the Authoritarian Personality," Journal of Social Psychology, XLV (1957), 217-32.

⁴²Carol Martin and Robert C. Nichols, "Personality and Religious Belief," Journal of Social Psychology, LVI (1962), 3-8.

⁴³Dorothy H. Swindell and Luciano L'Abate, "Religiosity, Dogmatism, and Repression-Sensitization," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, IX (1970), 249-51.

⁴⁴Daniel G. Brown and Warner L. Lowe, "Religious Beliefs and Personality Characteristics of College Students," Journal of Social Psychology, XXXIII (1951), 103-29.

⁴⁵Ibid.

highly-religious university students ("believers") and students at a Bible college scored higher in emotional stability than did irreligious university students ("non-believers"). Also, male believers and Bible students were more optimistic and extroverted than the male non-believers. Raschke⁴⁶ isolated dogmatism as a spirit exhibited more by "consensual" religious persons than by "committed" ones.⁴⁷ Martin and Nichols⁴⁸ found no significant correlations between religiosity and the Pa and L scales from the MMPI,⁴⁹ though some older studies by Broen⁵⁰ reported positive correlations. Studies on religiosity and self-esteem have provided conflicting findings. Stark⁵¹

⁴⁶Vernon Raschke, "Dogmatism and Committed and Consensual Religiosity," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, XII (1973), 339-44.

⁴⁷The consensual religious person is defined as one characterized by vague beliefs, intolerance, and a detached commitment to his faith; the committed person has personal, devotional beliefs, is tolerant of some religious diversity, and displays an active commitment to his faith. Russell O. Allen and Bernard Spilka, "Committed and Consensual Religion: A Specification of Religion-Prejudice Relationships," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, VI (1967), 191-206.

⁴⁸Martin and Nichols, "Personality and Religious Belief," 3-8.

⁴⁹In the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, the Pa scale measures symptoms of paranoia, and the L scale indicates defensiveness and the suppression of responses which might place the subject in an undesirable light. Patricia King-Ellison Good and John P. Brantner, The Physician's Guide to the MMPI (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961), pp. 12-13, 27-28.

⁵⁰W. E. Broen, Jr., "Personality Correlates of Certain Religious Attitudes," Journal of Consulting Psychology, XIX (1955), 64; and W. E. Broen, Jr., "A Factor Analytic Study of Religious Attitudes" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1956).

⁵¹Rodney Stark, "On the Incompatibility of Religion and Science: A Survey of American Graduate Students," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, III (1963), 3-20.

found a negative correlation between church affiliation and some indices of self-esteem and confidence among graduate students. But, Bender⁵² surveyed subjects fifteen years after college and found a positive correlation between religious values and ego strength. In summary then, all that can be confidently stated about the religious individual is that he tends to be more authoritarian, though not necessarily more dogmatic, than the non-religious individual; and that he is more conservative, and therefore more given to social conformity, than the non-religious individual.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has been demonstrated to be a factor which does interact with level of fear arousal. Leventhal and Perloe⁵³ found that subjects high in self-esteem were influenced more by optimistic communications than by threatening communications, while subjects low in self-esteem showed the opposite pattern. However, these results occurred only when the sources differed from the subjects in personality characteristics. Leventhal and Trembly⁵⁴ found that middle- and high-esteem subjects were better able to cope with intense threat

⁵²Irving E. Bender, "Changes in Religious Interest: A Retest After Fifteen Years," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LVII (1958), 41-46.

⁵³Leventhal and Perloe, "Self-Esteem and Persuasibility," 385-88.

⁵⁴Howard Leventhal and Grevilda Trembly, "Negative Emotions and Persuasion," Journal of Personality, XXXVI (1968), 154-68.

messages than were low-esteem subjects. Dabbs and Leventhal⁵⁵ reported that low-esteem subjects showed high compliance with recommendations in both high- and low-fear conditions, while high-esteem subjects showed high compliance only in the high fear conditions. In general, these findings concur with Kenneth Higbee: "People with high self-esteem are more persuaded by a high-threat appeal than are people with low self-esteem."⁵⁶

Sex Differences

The sex of a listener has been shown to be an influential factor in determining the response to a persuasive message. Women have been found to be generally more easily persuaded than men.⁵⁷ Leventhal, Jones, and Trembly⁵⁸ found that as threat level increased in booklets on the dangers of tetanus, female college students reported more fear than did the men. Fischer, et al.⁵⁹ discovered sex differences in the retention of ninth grade students of content from

⁵⁵James M. Dabbs, Jr., and Howard Leventhal, "Effects of Varying the Recommendations in a Fear-Arousing Communication," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, IV (1966), 525-31.

⁵⁶Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal," 430.

⁵⁷Thomas M. Scheidel, "Sex and Persuasibility," Speech Monographs, XXX (1963), 353-58; Albert L. Furbay, "The Influence of Scattered Versus Compact Seating on Audience Response," Speech Monographs, XXXII (1965), 144-48.

⁵⁸Howard Leventhal, Susan Jones, and Grevilda Trembly, "Sex Differences in Attitude and Behavior Change Under Conditions of Fear and Specific Instructions," Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, II (1966), 387-99.

⁵⁹Fischer, Cohen, Schlesinger, and Bloomer, "Effects of Relevant Stories," 75-87.

manuals on safe driving with different levels of fear arousal. The females showed greater retention of mild threat content than high threat content. Females who scored high on the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Test retained more from the high threat message than low anxiety females who heard the same message. Males had higher posttest retention scores than females, but they also had higher pretest scores on driving knowledge. Scheidel⁶⁰ found that college women retained significantly less content from a persuasive speech on political and educational issues, but this finding was also possibly due to the fact that the women were less informed on the issues discussed. These studies indicate then that women tend to be more persuasible and less retentive of message content than men, and that fear may additionally inhibit retention among women.

Conclusion

Listing contemporary areas of persuasion which use "scare" techniques, Kenneth Higbee mentioned public-opinion campaigns, propaganda efforts, advertising, and preaching.⁶¹ The final item on Higbee's list is a significant one, for the American pulpit has probably provided the occasion for more appeals to fear than any other public speaking situation. Modern communication researchers, however, have given little attention to the effects of such pathetic proofs in homiletic oratory. And, while attitude inventories have

⁶⁰Scheidel, "Sex and Persuasibility," 353-58.

⁶¹Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal," 426.

probed the somewhat elusive religious personality, research has not offered an explanation of the cognitive and behavioral interactions occurring between fear arousal and religiosity.

The present study sought therefore to contribute to current research by investigating some of the effects of fear arousal in the infrequently-explored rhetorical context of preaching. It asked whether the subjective evaluation of a homiletical message using fear appeals would be inhibited by the defensive-avoidance effect suggested by Janis and Feshbach and by Janis and Terwilliger, or possibly be enhanced by the interest factor discussed by Berkowitz and Cottingham. Also, the study looked to see if the consistent finding of research by Janis and Milholland, Janis and Terwilliger, Moltz and Thistlethwaite, and many others -- that level of fear arousal does not significantly determine the amount of message content retained -- would be confirmed using a religious message. Of special interest to this study were the effects of listener differences in religiosity, social attitudes, and self-esteem, on the reception of homiletical fear appeals on two levels. Studies on the religious personality are at best inconclusive, but such research as that by Nash and Berger, Goldsen, et al., Fisher, and Ranck suggest that the religious individual is somewhat impressionable and therefore potentially more suggestible to fear appeals. Brown and Lowe correlated religiosity and social conservatism, and Mann concluded that conservative persons are in the main potentially more persuadable. Several studies by Leventhal with others have found high self-esteem to be an attitude given to persuasion by high fear. How these differences interact with religious fear appeals was a major concern of this dissertation.

The research discussed in this chapter formed the background against which this study was formulated, and led to the experimental hypotheses stated at the outset of Chapter III.

III. PROCEDURE

Design of the Experiment

Primary Hypotheses to be Tested

The hypotheses to be tested in the present study are, in null form, as follows:

Hypothesis 1. a. Listener attitudes toward social issues, religious issues, and self, have no significant effect on or relationship to the subjective evaluation of a high- or low-fear appeal homiletical message.

b. Listener attitudes toward social issues, religious issues, and self, have no significant effect on or relationship to information retention from a high- or low-fear appeal homiletical message.

Hypothesis 2. a. There is no significant difference in listeners' subjective evaluation of a homiletical message using high fear appeals and a homiletical message using low fear appeals.

b. There is no significant difference in listeners' information retention from a homiletical message using high fear appeals and a homiletical message using low fear appeals.

Method

Subjects. The subjects for the present study were students in two sections of Speech 2, Voice and Articulation, and six sections of Speech 51, Public Speaking, at Louisiana State University during the Fall Semester of 1973. Speech 2 students study means of improving vocal expressiveness, articulation, and pronunciation, and Speech 51 students develop communicative skills through the composition and delivery of speeches in the classroom. Thus these subjects were not unaccustomed to speech analysis and evaluation. Each of the eight groups was randomly assigned to either the High-

or Low-Fear treatment, with this exception: two groups were interchanged in their assignment in order to equalize more closely the number of subjects in the two treatment groups. 138 students completed the pretest questionnaire; 135 received one of the two treatments and completed the posttest questionnaire. After discarding the questionnaires of those subjects who completed only one of the two questionnaires, the questionnaires that could not be matched, and the questionnaires that were improperly or incompletely filled out, 114 subjects remained to provide useable data for this study.

Table I demonstrates that the two treatment groups were fairly well equated with respect to age, sex, religious preference, and area of academic concentration. This study will be unable to draw any conclusions about the variable of race, which could conceivably be a telling factor in research of this kind. Only two of the 114 subjects were Negro; the large majority of the students in the classes (and at Louisiana State University) were Caucasian. The large number of Catholic students is reflective of the strength of the Roman Catholic Church in southern Louisiana. A good cross-section of academic areas is represented by the sample, though of course the curricula that require either Speech 2 or Speech 51 (e.g., Education, Pre-Veterinary, Speech and Hearing) are most prevalent.

Procedure. The pretest questionnaire was administered to the subjects to determine their attitudes and views on socio-political issues, religious issues, and themselves. The instructor of each class administered the questionnaire so as not to identify the pretest with both the experimenter and the subsequent posttest. The

TABLE I

Composition of the Sample

Characteristic	High Fear	Low Fear	Total
<u>Age (Average)</u>	20.11	19.95	20.03
<u>Sex</u>			
Male	31	29	60
Female	24	30	54
<u>Religious Preference</u>			
Catholic	25	17	42
Baptist	6	11	17
Methodist	8	8	16
Episcopal	3	6	9
Christian (unspecified)	2	5	7
Presbyterian	1	3	4
Others	4*	1**	5
Atheist or Agnostic	2	2	4
No preference	4	6	10
<u>Area of Academic Concentration</u>			
Education	5	8	13
Pre-Veterinary	8	5	13
Agriculture	5	5	10
Speech	3	7	10
Medicine and Dentistry	5	5	10
Forestry and Wildlife	3	5	8
Political Science and History	6	1	7
Psychology	2	3	5
Journalism	2	3	5
Architecture	1	3	4
Sociology	3	1	4
Law Enforcement	2	2	4
Interior Design	2	2	4
Business	2	1	3
Engineering	1	1	2
Others	4*	6**	10
Undecided	1	1	2

*Geography, Fine Arts, Geology, Physical Education

**Computer Science, Mathematics, Industrial Technology, English, Pre-Law, Physical Therapy

instructor was told to introduce the pretest to his students as simply a questionnaire to assess the attitudes of Louisiana State University students on various contemporary issues, being given in cooperation with the Department of Speech. The subjects were instructed to respond honestly to every statement on the Likert-type attitude measure and were given about fifteen minutes to complete the entire questionnaire. No explanation was offered regarding how the results of the survey would be used. The pretest was given to the eight classes over a two-week period in October, 1973.

For the administration of the experimental treatment, the experimenter was first introduced by the class instructor only as a graduate student in speech who had asked the assistance of the class in a project he was conducting. No mention was made of the association of this session and the pretest, given two weeks before. The experimenter's instructions to the subjects were as follows:

I would like to ask your help today by getting your honest reaction to a taped religious message. This is a message that could possibly be used as a short radio presentation or even a short television spot. I have come to you because you are speech students, and should have some idea about what constitutes effective speaking. So, I am going to ask you to listen closely to this message, and then give me your honest response to it on a short questionnaire that I have prepared. If you have any questions, I would ask you to hold them until after we have finished, since I would not want to bias your reaction to the message in any way. This tape is not the finished product; you may even hear "blips" where corrections have been made. But that is not important, because it is not the quality of the tape or even the delivery of the speaker that you should be concerned with -- it is the ideas contained in this message. It will only last about ten minutes. Please listen carefully.

Immediately following the playing of the taped message, each subject was given a questionnaire and asked not to open it until told to do so. The preliminary request was that the students list on the back of the questionnaire what they considered to be the three main points -- the three social revolutions -- discussed in the message. It was explained that it was necessary to complete this task before opening the questionnaire, since the items within would contain clues as to the identification of the three main points. The students were told to open the questionnaire and begin, once they had completed the initial task to their satisfaction. About fifteen minutes were allotted for the completion of the posttest questionnaire. After the questionnaires were collected, the students were encouraged to ask any questions about the purpose and scope of the study. Each class was administered the treatment and posttest exactly two weeks after they had completed the pretest, with one exception: one of the instructors found it inconvenient to give up class time on the assigned date and the treatment was postponed five days hence, resulting in a nineteen-day interim period.

Measuring Instruments

Pretest

The pretest questionnaire consisted of three attitude measurement scales: social attitudes, religious attitudes, and self-esteem (see Appendix B). The three scales were reproduced, with very slight modifications, as they appear in Shaw and Wright's

Scales For the Measurement of Attitudes.¹ Listener attitudes toward social issues were measured with a scale developed by Kerlinger (1963)² for the placement of an individual's social attitudes on a liberalism-conservatism continuum. This scale, though not widely used in the past, is considered satisfactory with regard to reliability and validity.³ Half of the 26 items in this scale are worded to be consistent with a conservative social ideology; the other half are liberally-worded items. Two items, one conservative and one liberal, were not used because they seemed to be repetitive, overlapping statements which were included in the pretest. Martin and Nichols' (1962) religious belief scale⁴ was used to measure religiosity; that is, the acceptance of Christian religious teachings and general positive evaluation of the Christian faith. The authors report a high .95 reliability estimate, though evidence for the scale's validity is limited.⁵ 40 of this scale's 41 items were used in the pretest, 21 worded positively and 19 worded negatively. A scale developed by

¹Marvin E. Shaw and Jack M. Wright, Scales For the Measurement of Attitudes (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967). The modifications included the dropping of several items from the original scales -- two from the social attitudes scale, one from the religious attitudes scale, and six from the self-esteem scale. This was done to keep the questionnaire from being quite so lengthy, and also to equalize more the polarity of the items. For the latter reason, two items were reworded in order to switch their polarity -- "I believe that there is a Heaven and a Hell" was changed to "I do not believe that there is a Heaven and a Hell," for example. It was not felt that these few changes would in any way invalidate any of the scales.

²Ibid., pp. 322-24.

³Ibid., p. 323.

⁴Ibid., pp. 343-45.

⁵Ibid., p. 345.

Berger (1952)⁶ was used to measure individual attitudes toward self. Of the thirty-six items Berger selected to determine self-acceptance, twenty-eight were worded negatively and only eight positively. In order to equalize the polarity of the statements more, six negative items were not used and one negative item was altered to read positively: "I am often bothered by feelings of inferiority" was changed to "I am seldom bothered by feelings of inferiority." Thus, this section of the pretest contained twenty-one negative items and nine positive items. The Berger scale has demonstrated both high reliability and validity.⁷

The response mode for all three scales was modified Likert type. The subjects were instructed to respond to each statement in terms of their personal agreement or disagreement by circling a 1 for "strongly agree," a 2 for "agree," a 3 for "undecided, or equally agree and disagree," a 4 for "disagree," or a 5 for "strongly disagree." The score for each item thus ranged from 1 to 5, with the direction of the scoring reversed for negatively worded items. A score of 1 on a given item would represent strong agreement with a liberally worded item on the social attitude scale, with a pro-religion item on the religious belief scale, and with a positive self-concept item on the self-acceptance scale. A mean score was found for each subject on each of the three scales, by summing across all items within each scale and dividing by the number of items.

⁶Ibid., pp. 432-36.

⁷Ibid., pp. 432-33.

Therefore a mean score of 1.0 on the social attitude scale would indicate the strongest possible liberal response, while a score of 5.0 would indicate the strongest conservative response.

Posttest

The questionnaire administered immediately after the treatment was made up of three sections: Likert-type response items, sentence completion blanks, and additional comments (see Appendix B). First, twelve Likert scale items⁸ constructed by the experimenter were used to measure the listeners' general subjective response to the message. These statements, six worded positively and six negatively, were concerned essentially with reaction to the approach the message took ("I did not agree with the speaker's way of presenting his material") and its content ("This message increased my concern for some of the problems discussed"). Subjects were asked to respond to each statement by entering a 1 for "I strongly agree," a 2 for "I agree," a 3 for "I am undecided, or I both agree and disagree," a 4 for "I disagree," or a 5 for "I strongly disagree." The score for each of the twelve items ranged from 1 to 5, with the direction of the scoring reversed for negatively worded items. A mean score was found for each subject on the subjective response section. A score of 1.0 would represent the maximum positive evaluation of the message, and 5.0 the maximum negative evaluation.

⁸The summated rating scale technique developed by R.A. Likert in 1932 allows for the relatively simple construction of scales. It has proven to be a reliable device for attitude measurement, even with scales of less than twenty statements. Philip Emmert, "Attitude Scales," Methods of Research in Communication, eds. Philip Emmert and William D. Brooks (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970), 204.

A fifteen-item sentence completion section was used to measure the amount of message content which each subject was able to remember. The first twelve blanks covered information and evidence common to both treatment versions. The last three items were the three main points of the message, which the subjects were asked to provide on the back of the questionnaire before filling out any other of the sections. A score indicating the percentage of correct responses was computed for each subject across the fifteen items; thus a perfect score would be 1.00 or 100%, while a score of 0.00 or 0% would indicate no correct responses.

Finally, space was provided for the subjects to respond to this question: "Was there anything in particular about this message that you liked or disliked?" The purpose of this section was of course not for statistical analysis, but to provide the experimenter with any comments or reactions which might afford added insight into the attitudes and responses of the subjects.

Construction of the Messages

The Topic

In a previous study conducted by the experimenter, fear appeal messages were composed on the biblical topic of hell and punishment in the after-life.⁹ The present study is again seeking to investigate the effects of appeals to fear in the context of a religious message. However, the interpretation of scripture varies so widely among and within Christian religious groups that response to a message dealing with actual points of theology may to some extent depend on the listener's agreement with the speaker's exegesis.¹⁰ Therefore the topic selected for this study is one dealing with social problems rather than theological issues. Much of the ideas and content of the constructed messages was drawn from a series of religious radio lectures aired in 1968 on the NBC and Mutual radio network program, "Herald of Truth," under the title, "Three American Revolution."¹¹ The three points, or "revolutions," which are discussed are crime, standards of morality, and racism. The constructed messages

⁹Kenneth R. Durham, Jr., "An Experimental Study of the Effects of Homiletical Fear Appeals on Source Credibility and Information Retention" (unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1972).

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 42-44.

¹¹John Allen Chalk, 13 radio lectures, "Three American Revolutions" (Abilene, Texas: Highland Church of Christ, 1968). Other sources used in the preparation of the treatments were U.S., National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Summary for Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, reprint (New York: Bantam Books, 1968); and "VD: The Epidemic," Newsweek, January 24, 1972, pp. 46-50.

for this study pointed out the unrest and disorder caused by these conditions in America, then proposed that a return to Christian principles and an increased dependence upon God would help to alleviate these societal ills. Thus the messages have a religious thrust and conclusion but do not deal explicitly with scripture.

Levels of Fear Appeals

Two messages were constructed on the aforementioned topic. Form 1 was termed the "high fear" message and Form 2 the "low fear" message. The labels "high fear" and "low fear" are of course relative classifications, descriptive of the approach or appeal of the messages and not necessarily of the amount of fear which is measurably aroused by them. Kenneth Higbee has observed that fear appeals are most often persuasive attempts that either associate an undesirable practice (e.g., smoking) with negative consequences (e.g., lung cancer), or associate a desirable practice (e.g., brushing teeth) with the avoidance of negative consequences (e.g., cavities).¹² The messages in the present study take the latter approach.

To establish the differences in the levels of fear arousal between Form 1 and Form 2, the following techniques were used in the construction of the messages:

Personalized Language. Successful American evangelists have historically used personalized language to aim their admonitions directly at each listener. Jonathan Edwards made innumerable personal

¹²Kenneth L. Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal: Research on Threat Appeals: 1953-1968," Psychological Bulletin, LXXII (1969), 426.

references to his hearers in sermons like the classic, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."¹³ Nineteenth-century revivalist Charles Finney proclaimed in a lecture called, "How to Preach the Gospel":

Preaching should be direct. The gospel should be preached to men, and not about them. The minister must . . . preach to them about themselves, and not leave the impression that he is preaching to them about others.¹⁴

Billy Sunday in the early part of this century and Billy Graham today are examples of popular evangelists who have used this technique of direct address. Form 1 therefore was constructed to contain numerous personal pronouns: "you," "your," "we," "us," "our," and "ourselves." Listeners were additionally addressed as "friends" and "listeners." In this way Form 1 was designed to create the "this can happen to you" effect that Janis and Feshbach sought in their fear appeal research.¹⁵ Direct references to the speaker ("I," "me") also characterized Form 1. In contrast, Form 2 is much more indirect and impersonal. The only personal references in Form 2 are six uses of the pronouns "we" and "us" in a quotation from Charles Dickens A Tale of Two Cities found in both Forms 1 and 2. Thus the listeners are never directly addressed in Form 2 (see Table II).

Loaded Language. Form 1 uses more descriptive, pejorative language than does Form 2. The "loaded" language (i.e., those words

¹³A. Craig Baird, ed., American Public Addresses: 1740-1952 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956), pp. 15-28.

¹⁴Charles G. Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 199.

¹⁵Irving L. Janis and Seymour Feshbach, "Effects of Fear-Arousing Communications," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLVIII (1953), 79.

TABLE II

Comparison of Personal Pronouns Used in the Messages

Pronouns	High Fear	Low Fear
Listener Pronouns		
"you"	21	0
"your(s)"	11	0
"we"	20	4
"us"	12	2
"our"	20	0
"ourselves"	4	0
<hr/>		
Total	88	6
Speaker Pronouns		
"I"	5	0
"me"	3	0
<hr/>		
Total	8	0

and phrases with a negative connotative meaning) emphasizes the more severe and painful consequences of the social problems discussed.

For example, Form 1 speaks of venereal disease in these vivid terms:

First swelling and a rash, then open sores, later possible sterility, paralysis, blindness, or insanity -- not to mention the dangers of deformity and death to unborn babies. The picture of someone you love suffering in such a horrible way should be enough to cause us to look for the cause of this plague which is reaching epidemic proportions.

Form 2 deals with the same topic in a less emotional fashion:

Newsweek reported last year that venereal disease is the most common communicable disease in the country, with the number of cases each year exceeding that of strep throat, measles, mumps, and tuberculosis combined.

Table III makes comparisons of additional passages to demonstrate differences in the language and style of Forms 1 and 2.

General Approach. Overall, Form 1 tends to emphasize the personal physical pain and calamity that can potentially befall the listener or his family or his friends. There are at least eight strong statements to this effect in Form 1; Form 2 contains none. Form 1 also warns that the conditions discussed could lead even to the destruction of America itself. Three statements point to the possibility of national disaster; Form 2 makes no such prophecies. Form 2 concerns itself more with the relatively abstract notion of a society that is depersonalizing its members and frustrating human relationships. One of the Likert-type statements in the posttest was constructed as an indicator of whether or not the difference in fear appeal level was perceived by the subjects: "This message seemed aimed at frightening me."

TABLE III

Comparison of Selected Passages From the Treatments

High Fear	Low Fear
<p>This morning I want you to consider briefly with me three revolutions that are taking place in America today -- three battlefronts upon which we find ourselves, in a domestic war that perhaps will determine the ultimate destiny of our civilization.</p>	<p>In order to understand some of the consequences and implications of this age of rapid change in America, it should prove valuable to examine three particular areas in which revolutionary changes have taken place.</p>
<p>The high priest of hedonism, Hugh Hefner, has brought to our country a new religion built on the principle of pleasure -- the tragic consequence of which is that people are treated like things -- objects of selfish gratification. It's this philosophy, under the guise of freedom and sophistication, that has bred the insensitivity that wrecks marriages and the irresponsibility that deserts or kills unwanted children.</p>	<p>The principle of sex-for-pleasure-only that Hugh Hefner and others have built financial empires upon, too often results in the treatment of persons as things, objects of momentary gratification. Any moral principle that violates human dignity and exploits the personality at its deepest level can never lead ultimately to physical and emotional satisfaction.</p>
<p>Concluding Statement:</p> <p>. . . we may choose the ostrich approach to these crises, conveniently burying our heads in the sand to obscure the murders, the rapes, the riots, and the venereal disease-- because those are the bad things that happen to other people. Please don't wait until it happens to your neighbor, or to your husband, or to your little sister, before you open your eyes to what's going on around you. Please give the God who created this world a chance to make it a better place through your life. The choice is yours.</p>	<p>Concluding Statement:</p> <p>Profound social upheavals like the ones mentioned today will not work themselves out; neither is there promise that science and technology will come up with any original new solutions. For these are problems that can only be solved by mending relationships -- between man and God, and between man and man. If mankind will only follow the direction of the God who created this world, perhaps the wound caused by man's inhumanity to man can someday be healed.</p>

Preparation of the Treatments

Selection of the Speaker. Though the subjects were asked to concentrate on the content of the message rather than its delivery, it was important that a speaker be chosen who had some speaking experience and ability, and whose voice and delivery were not noticeably unusual enough to interact themselves as variables affecting the subjects' evaluation of the messages. The individual selected was a male doctoral student in public address who was in his middle thirties. Having obtained graduate degrees in both theology and speech, and having served as a minister for over ten years, the speaker had had considerable experience in public speaking.

Recording of the Messages. After the speaker had rehearsed the messages to his satisfaction, the two forms of the treatment were then recorded on a Sony Stereorecorder 230 tape recorder. The speaker made a conscious effort not only to present the messages conversationally, but also to read both Form 1 and Form 2 at the same rate, pitch, and loudness level. Thus any differences perceived in the two messages would be attributable to the content, and not the delivery, of the messages. The resulting recording met with the approval of the experimenter, though several corrections were taped over accidental mispronunciations and noticeably audible non-fluencies. It was explained to the listeners that any "blips" they might hear were due to the fact that this message was not intended to be a finished product but was in fact a trial recording.

IV. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Results

Analysis of the Data

To test the strength of relationship between the variables in this study, a simple correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) was computed. This type of regression analysis seeks to find a direct linear relationship, in which a change in one variable is accompanied by a change in another. This may be a positive correlation (approaching +1.0), in which the measures vary together, or a negative correlation (approaching -1.0), in which the measures vary inversely. To index relationships among more than two variables, a coefficient of multiple correlation (R) was computed. A modified t test was used to determine the statistical significance of the correlation coefficients. Using these statistics, the experimenter was able to characterize the existence of relationships between and among attitude and response variables.

A least-squares, multiple-factor analysis of variance statistic (F -ratio) was computed to test for the significance of difference between the effects of high- and low-fear messages on the subject groups, with the additional factor of sex considered. The factorial design of the experiment was thus 2×2 ; that is, it considered the interaction of two levels of fear arousal with two levels of sex (male and female) among the independent variables. The F statistic is calculated to indicate differences between means

of two or more groups, and allows the experimenter to isolate a particular variable held accountable for the differences. The analysis of regression, an F-ratio calculated in a regression setting, was used to test interrelationships among attitude characteristics.

Experimental Hypotheses

A two-tailed test of hypothesis was used in this study, since the experimental hypotheses are stated in the null form. This type of test is used when the hypotheses make no prediction of the direction in which differences will occur. Using the F-ratio and t test, the region for rejection of the null hypothesis was equal to or beyond the .05 percentile point. A statistic falling between that point and .01 is considered to represent a significant finding. A statistic falling at or beyond the .01 point is considered to represent a highly significant finding.

Table IV presents correlation coefficients between the three attitude variables measured on the pretest, and listener responses -- subjective evaluation of the message and information retention -- as measured on the posttest. In the High Fear group, a fairly high positive correlation was found to exist between religiosity and subjective evaluation; this correlation was also highly significant. Overall, this same positive correlative relationship was found to exist, and was again highly significant. The more religious a subject tended to be, the more likely it was that he would evaluate the message positively. An additional significant correlation, this time in the negative direction, was found overall between social attitudes and subjective evaluation of the message. The more liberal a subject

TABLE IV

Correlations Between Listener Attitude Variables and
Listener Responses to High- and Low-Fear Messages

	Evaluation of Message	Information Retention
<u>High Fear Group (N=55)</u>		
Social Attitudes	-0.22	-0.02
Religiosity	0.63**	0.03
Self-Esteem	-0.03	0.12
<u>Low Fear Group (N=59)</u>		
Social Attitudes	-0.20	0.01
Religiosity	0.18	0.13
Self-Esteem	0.12	-0.20
<u>Total Subject Group (N=114)</u>		
Social Attitudes	-0.19*	-0.01
Religiosity	0.40**	0.12
Self-Esteem	0.05	-0.08
*P < .05 **P < .01		

tended to be socially, the less likely he would be to evaluate the message positively. These results therefore call for the rejection of null hypothesis 1a. Acceptance of experimental hypothesis 1b seems warranted in view of the fact that no significant correlations were found between listener attitudes and information retention.

Table V presents correlations among the attitude variables themselves, and between the listener response variables. In both High- and Low-Fear groups and overall, a highly significant positive correlation was found between religiosity and social attitudes. The more religious an individual tends to be, the more conservative he tends to be socially. Tables VI, VII, and VIII present an analysis of regression on each of the listener attitude variables. Tables VI and VII both reveal a highly significant interrelation between social attitudes and religiosity. An R^2 statistic (coefficient of determination) of 0.22 found in both analyses indicates that 22% of the variance in social attitudes measured was shared, or accounted for, by religious attitudes measured, and vice versa. Self-esteem seemed to act as a variable relatively independent of the other two attitude measures, as indicated by Table VIII.

Tables IX and X report analyses of variance between High- and Low-Fear groups in their response to the treatments. There was a significant difference between the groups in their subjective evaluation of the message they heard, according to Table IX. The High Fear group had a response mean of 2.28, the Low Fear a mean of 2.52. Thus listener evaluation of the High Fear message was significantly more positive than that of the Low Fear message, and null

TABLE V

Correlations Among Listener Attitude Variables
and Between Listener Response Variables

	High Fear Group (N=55)	Low Fear Group (N=59)	Total Subject Group (N=114)
<u>Listener Attitude Variables</u>			
Social Attitudes x Religiosity	-0.50**	-0.42**	-0.45**
Social Attitudes x Self-Esteem	0.10	-0.17	-0.06
Religiosity x Self-Esteem	-0.21	-0.04	-0.10
<u>Listener Response Variables</u>			
Subjective Evaluation x Information Retention	-0.05	-0.18	-0.13
**p < .01			

TABLE VI
Analysis of Regression on Social Attitudes

Source of Variation	d.f.	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	R ²
Total	113	13.46			
Regression	2	2.91	1.45	15.29**	0.22
Religiosity	1	2.86 ¹	2.86	30.04**	
Self-Esteem	1	0.17 ¹	0.17	1.70	
Error	111	10.55	0.10		

**P <.01

¹Partial sum of squares.

TABLE VII
Analysis of Regression on Religiosity

Source Of Variation	d.f.	Sum Of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>	<u>R²</u>
Total	113	74.64			
Regression	2	16.54	8.27	15.79**	0.22
Social Attitudes	1	15.73 ¹	15.73	30.04**	
Self-Esteem	1	1.31 ¹	1.31	2.50	
Error	111	58.11	0.52		

**p < .01

¹Partial sum of squares.

TABLE VIII
Analysis of Regression on Self-Esteem

Source of Variation	d.f.	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>	<u>R</u> ²
Total	113	21.84			
Regression	2	0.56	0.28	1.47	0.03
Social Attitudes	1	0.33 ¹	0.33	1.70	
Religiosity	1	0.48 ¹	0.48	2.50	
Error	111	21.28	0.19		

¹Partial sum of squares.

TABLE IX
Least Squares Analysis of Variance on
Subjective Evaluation of Message

Source of Variation	d.f.	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>
Total	113	46.23		
Group	1	1.99 ¹	1.99	5.01*
Sex	1	0.63 ¹	0.63	1.60
Group x Sex	1	0.62 ¹	0.62	1.59
Error	110	43.29	0.39	

*P < .05

¹partial sum of squares.

TABLE X

Least Squares Analysis of Variance on Information Retention

Source Of Variation	d.f.	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>
Total	113	3.42		
Group	1	0.02 ¹	0.02	0.88
Sex	1	0.21 ¹	0.21	7.53**
Group x Sex	1	0.11 ¹	0.11	3.87*
Error	110	3.06	0.03	

*P < .05
**P < .01

¹Partial sum of squares.

hypothesis 2a is consequently rejected. Table X indicates no difference between the groups in information retention scores.¹ However, there was in the retention scores a significant interaction effect present between group and sex. Figure 1 pictures the interaction pattern, as males scored higher on retention from the Low Fear message and females made their higher retention scores in the High Fear group. And, as Table X reports and Figure 1 illustrates, sex was a highly significant variable -- males scored much higher overall than females on information retention. The demonstrated influence of the sex of the listener on retention therefore prevents the full acceptance of null hypothesis 2b. Table XI compares all of the listener response means.

Table XII presents analyses of variance between and within groups on each of the listener attitude measures. There are no significant differences or interactions, indicative of the random nature of the subject sampling and of the high comparability of the High- and Low-Fear groups.

¹Information retention means: High Fear = 0.59, Low Fear = 0.56.

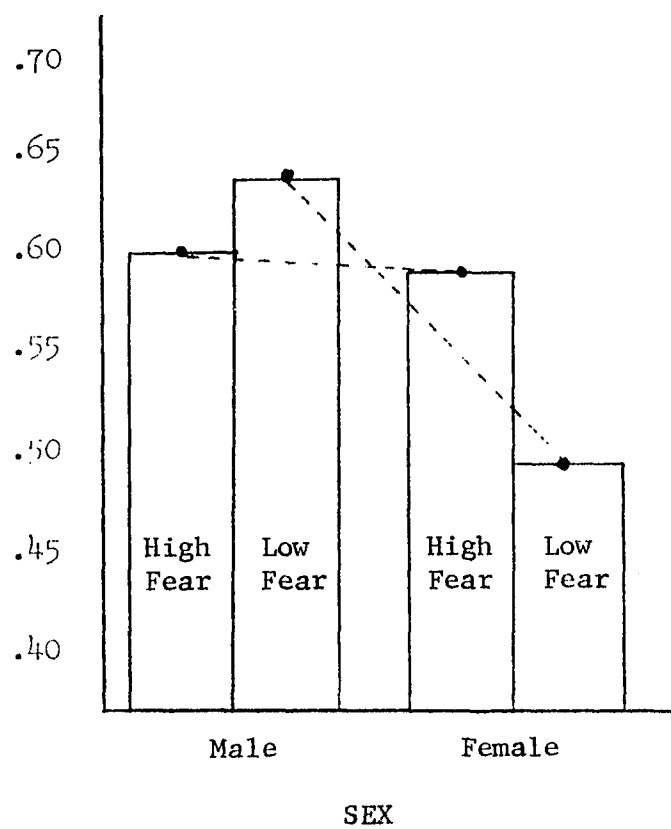


FIGURE I

Comparison of Information Retention Means

TABLE XI
Comparison of Means -- Listener Response to Messages

	High Fear			Low Fear		
	Male	Female	Difference	Male	Female	Difference
Subjective Evaluation	2.41	2.11	.30	2.52	2.52	.00
Information Retention	.60	.58	.02	.63	.49	.14

TABLE XII

Least Squares Analysis of Variance on Listener Attitudes

Source Of Variation		d.f.	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
<u>Social Attitudes</u>					
Total		113	13.46		
Group		1	0.09	0.09	0.75
Sex		1	0.30	0.30	2.55
Group x Sex		1	0.06	0.06	0.53
Error		110	13.01	0.12	
<u>Religiosity</u>					
Total		113	74.64		
Group		1	0.07	0.07	0.10
Sex		1	1.11	1.11	1.70
Group x Sex		1	1.41	1.41	2.15
Error		110	71.95	0.65	
<u>Self-Esteem</u>					
Total		113	21.84		
Group		1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sex		1	0.07	0.07	0.34
Group x Sex		1	0.14	0.14	0.70
Error		110	21.63	0.20	

Conclusions

The results of the present study seem to indicate that there are certain listener attitudes which can affect the reception of homiletical fear appeals. Religiously-inclined persons predictably liked the message, which concluded with a recommendation about Christian faith and standards. This is consistent with the congruity principle discussed by Berlo and Gulley,² which holds that a listener is likely to prefer the speaker whose message is consistent with the listener's own presuppositions. Social attitudes were found to have what may be an influential relationship with the listeners' evaluation of the message they heard. This relationship can be at least partially explained by the high correlation between social attitudes and religiosity (Table V). According to J. P. Guilford, an r of .45 is indicative of a "substantial relationship."³ Though correlation does not signify causation, the relationship between religiosity and conservative social attitudes seems fairly apparent, with the additional weight of the analyses of regression (Tables VI and VII) indexing their concurrency. Kerlinger's social attitudes scale,⁴ which was used in the pretest questionnaire, assumes this relationship,

²David K. Berlo and Halbert E. Gulley, "Some Determinants of the Effect of Oral Communication in Producing Attitude Change and Learning," Speech Monographs, XXIV (1957), 10-20.

³J. P. Guilford, Fundamental Statistics in Psychology and Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), p. 145.

⁴Marvin E. Shaw and Jack M. Wright, Scales For the Measurement of Attitudes (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), pp. 322-24.

evidenced by the inclusion of three "conservative" items which are pro-religion in nature: "Individuals who are against churches and religions should not be allowed to teach in colleges"; "If civilization is to survive, there must be a turning back to religion"; and "Some sort of religious education should be given in the public schools." This built-in mutuality within the measuring devices no doubt contributed to the highly-significant statistics relating religiosity and conservative social attitudes. Self-esteem apparently did not influence reception of the messages to any great extent, though some previous studies have shown that high self-esteem listeners are often more influenced by high-fear appeals than are people with low self-esteem.⁵ It should be pointed out also that no significant correlation was found between religiosity and low self-esteem, a relationship suggested implicitly and explicitly by some previous research.⁶

The college students who heard the messages in this study seemed to prefer the High-Fear form over the Low-Fear form, regardless of their religious inclinations (Table IX). This finding is consistent with the results of a previous study conducted by the experimenter,⁷

⁵Kenneth L. Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal: Research in Threat Appeals: 1953-1968," Psychological Bulletin, LXXII (1969), 439.

⁶Seymour Fisher, "Acquiescence and Religiosity," Psychological Reports, XV (1964), 784; James G. Ranck, "Religious Conservatism-Liberalism and Mental Health," Pastoral Psychology, XII (1961), 34-40; Rodney Stark, "On the Incompatibility of Religion and Science: A Survey of American Graduate Students," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, III (1963), 3-20.

⁷Kenneth R. Durham, Jr., "An Experimental Study of the Effects of Homiletical Fear Appeals on Source Credibility and Information Retention" (unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1972), pp. 42-44.

but somewhat unexpected in that the present study used subjects with a broad diversity of religious beliefs,⁸ while the earlier study used subjects who were not only religious but conservatively religious on the whole. However, in view of the fact that 88% of the students in this study listed some religious preference, it would seem that the subject group was fairly religion-oriented overall. Still, it was thought that the following comment made by a subject was indicative of an attitude somewhat common among college students: "I generally start feeling antagonistic when I feel like someone is trying to 'convert' me, no matter how mild the influence may be."⁹ It was anticipated that such an attitude might inhibit positive evaluation of a religious message, especially one using high-fear appeals, but no such defensive-avoidance reaction was evident. The High Fear group in the main responded favorably to their message, making laudatory comments ranging from "a great message" to "It ought to be put on TV so everyone in the country could hear it."¹⁰

A possible explanation of the indicated preference for the High Fear message is the interest value of the message. Robbins¹¹ reported that anxiety was positively related to attention; as fear

⁸The religiosity mean for all subjects was 2.44 on a 1.0 to 5.0 scale, with a minimum individual mean of 1.13 and a maximum of 4.45.

⁹90 of the 114 subjects (79%) made some sort of written comment on the posttest questionnaire under the question, "Was there anything in particular about this message that you liked or disliked?"

¹⁰More favorable comments (about 40% more) about the message were made by subjects in the High Fear group than those in Low Fear.

¹¹Paul R. Robbins, "Self-Reports of Reactions to Fear-Arousing Information," Psychological Reports, XI (1962), 761-64.

level was increased in messages on cancer, the reported interest level of listeners increased as well. Berkowitz and Cottingham¹² found that the weak fear message in their study was regarded as relatively uninteresting. Kenneth Higbee makes an interesting suggestion in this regard. He observes that while previous studies indicate no clear relationship between fear level and interest value, there has been a difference between listener responses in laboratory settings and in field settings:

It may be that with a captive audience high fear arouses the interest of those audience members who have no choice but to receive the message, whereas in natural settings people have the choice of avoiding the communication altogether. High fear may be more effective in getting the attention of both groups of people but may depress interest in exposing oneself to such a message if one has the choice.¹³

The students who heard the religious messages in the present study obviously constituted a "captive" audience; the treatments were administered in a laboratory setting, the classroom. Possibly the High Fear message provided the listeners with features to which they could more readily affix their attention and interest: personalized, highly descriptive language, and appeals to the security of family and friends. However, it would seem that heightened interest would also yield higher retention scores, an effect not demonstrated in this study. There was in fact no correlation evident between the way a

¹²Leonard Berkowitz and Donald Cottingham, "The Learning Interest Value and Relevance of Fear-Arousing Communications," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LX (1960), 37-43.

¹³Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal," 433.

listener evaluated the message and the amount of information retained from it (Table V). It would be impossible from the evidence available to state just why the High Fear message was preferred by the college students; but the interest value factor seems feasible at least as a partial explanation for this demonstrated preference.

The matter of actual fear arousal in this experiment deserves a comment in passing. It should be stressed that the fundamental question asked by this study is not, "How does fear affect listener response?" but, "How do appeals to fear -- attempts at fear arousal -- affect listener response?" While there is no way of knowing whether or not fear was actually aroused to any degree among the High Fear subjects, it does appear that those listeners were somewhat aware that attempts at fear arousal were being made. In response to the statement on the posttest, "This message seemed aimed at frightening me," the High Fear group tended to agree more, or at least disagree less, with the item than did the Low Fear group.¹⁴ The following comments on the message were volunteered by High Fear listeners: "it seemed to be a scare technique"; "too many appeals to emotion"; and "At times speaker seemed to . . . strike fear in the audience . . . antagonizing the listener, but not to any serious extent." Thus it may be assumed that the difference in fear-attempt level between the two treatments was relatively perceptible.

With regard to information retention, neither high- nor low-fear proved to be a superior teaching tool. This finding concurs with Higbee's summary statement: "The best conclusion that can be drawn

¹⁴High Fear mean = 3.35; Low Fear mean = 4.04.

from the research relevant to the learning of message content is that level of threat is not significantly related to learning of factual content."¹⁵ It is also consistent with the experimenter's previous study on homiletical fear appeals.¹⁶ On the other hand, an unexpected effect was discovered in the retention scores -- significantly higher scores were turned in by the men, especially in the Low Fear group. While women have recorded lower retention scores in some past research,¹⁷ the magnitude of the differences exhibited in the crossing pattern (Figure 1) is somewhat surprising. It appears that some factor or factors greatly inhibited the retention of the women who heard the Low Fear message. Fischer, et al.¹⁸ found that ninth grade girls actually scored higher overall on low fear content retention, but also that those girls who scored high in manifest anxiety scored higher on high fear content retention. Individual differences interacting with fear level may then account partially for this interesting result. The interest value factor discussed above might be considered also. Perhaps no or little fear was aroused in the females, who tend to respond more extremely to threat level

¹⁵Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal," 432.

¹⁶Durham, "Effects of Homiletical Fear Appeals," pp. 41-42.

¹⁷Thomas M. Scheidel, "Sex and Persuasibility," Speech Monographs, XXX (1963), 353-58; Edward H. Fischer, Stanley L. Cohen, Lawrence E. Schlesinger, and Richard H. Bloomer, "Some Effects of Relevant Stories Portraying Danger on Retention of Information Associated With the Stories," Journal of Social Psychology, LXXIII (1967), 75-87.

¹⁸Fischer, Cohen, Schlesinger, and Bloomer, "Effects of Relevant Stories," 75-87.

changes than men,¹⁹ and so their interest was not piqued -- they had little motivation to retain the content of the message. Finally, the apportionment of subjects in the Low Fear group could have been another contributing factor. Over half of the Low Fear females were contained in one class, and the mean retention score for those females was somewhat lower than the mean for the remainder of the Low Fear females. Perhaps some environmental or personal factors independent of the treatment influenced the cluster of low scores in that particular class. While differences unique to that one class may help to explain the size of the diversity between High- and Low-Fear female retention scores, it is doubtful that this is an effect of sufficient weight to deny the significance of the interaction effect between sex and fear level.

In summary, the following conclusions seem to be justified within the limitations of this study:

1. A homiletical message using high fear appeals may be evaluated more highly by listeners than one using low fear appeals.
2. Neither high fear nor low fear seems to be superior in terms of eliciting information retention from a homiletical message; however, male listeners may be more retentive overall than females, and especially more retentive from a low fear message.
3. The more religious an individual tends to be, the more likely it is that he or she will positively evaluate a homiletical message.

¹⁹Howard Leventhal, Susan Jones, and Grevilda Trembly, "Sex Differences in Attitude and Behavior Change Under Conditions of Fear and Specific Instructions," Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 11 (1976), 387-99.

4. The more religious an individual tends to be, the more socially conservative he or she will tend to be.

Finally, the conclusions to be drawn from this study include some implications which may be relevant for the religious orator. It should be noted that these findings did occur in a laboratory setting; a college classroom is certainly a different public speaking environment from a church service. Church-goers do not constitute a captive audience in the same sense that members of a university speech class do. The former group of listeners to a greater extent exercise the power of choice in hearing a religious message, and are likely to be more predisposed to agree with its arguments. Therefore it would be presumptuous to generalize directly from the subjects in this study to the average religious congregation. However, one conclusion drawn from this and previous research does stand out as plausibly applicable to the use of fear in sermons: high fear is probably an effective attention-getting device, but probably not a superior teaching device. The efficacy of appeals to fear in persuasion is still unclear. And even if high fear is more persuasive than low fear, as some research has concluded,²⁰ the preacher is still left to wrestle with the ethical legitimacy of suggestion as a homiletical technique.

The present study leaves many questions yet unanswered about the use of homiletical fear appeals. Further research might, for example, consider long-term as well as immediate effects of appeals to fear from the pulpit. Results need to be drawn from population

²⁰Higbee, "Fifteen Years of Fear Arousal," 441.

samples characterized by more diversity in terms of age, education, and socio-economic level. The list of religious topics with which fear appeals have been associated is quite variegated; listener response may vary from one topic to another. For instance, the apparent absence of a defensive-avoidance reaction by the college students in this study may be due to the nature of the topic areas discussed (i.e., social issues rather than specific religious issues). Further studies might therefore investigate some other homiletical topic areas. Additionally, future research needs to clear up the muddled waters concerning the religious personality. The committed-consensual paradigm is a quite intriguing one, and offers a possibly valuable approach to furthering understanding of the relationships between listener attitudes and fear appeals. In short, the hem of the garment has scarcely been touched in homiletical fear appeal research. Quantitative study is understandably problematic within the elusive and subjective area of religious rhetoric. But the American pulpit represents the most established, regular public address forum outside of television and radio, and is deserving of more than just historical and philosophical analysis.

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APPENDIX A

High Fear Message

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the spring of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

Charles Dickens' description of 19th century England in A Tale of Two Cities could well be applied to the paradoxical times in which we find ourselves. Though science and technology are curing humanity's diseases and introducing new conveniences daily, individual people -- common, ordinary people like you and me -- are experiencing more anxiety and insecurity than we ever have before. We live in an age in which we can communicate freely with men on the moon, but can't seem to be able to talk with our next door neighbor. During this time of social, political, and moral upheaval, we see Modern Man moving away from supernatural, religious interests, and toward individual, secular interests. This morning I want you to consider briefly with me three revolutions that are taking place in America today -- three battlefronts upon which we find ourselves, in a domestic war that perhaps will determine the ultimate destiny of our civilization. Those revolutions are (1) crime, (2) standards of morality, and (3) racism.

Crime

Consider first the shadow of crime that hangs over America. The rate of increase of personal crimes -- assaults, murders, rapes --

is growing considerably faster than our population rate. And listeners, don't shake your heads and think of a few isolated individuals who comprise the "criminal element" in our country -- one of every six boys will at some time be referred to a Juvenile Court; there are over 2 million Americans now either in prisons and juvenile training schools, or on probation and parole; you could fill a large football stadium with the convicted murderers in our prisons.

Have you ever thought seriously of killing a member of your family or a good friend? Well, apparently thousands of Americans do every year. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice reported six years ago, ". . . about 70% of all willful killings, nearly two-thirds of all aggravated assaults, and a high percentage of forcible rapes are committed by family members, friends, or other persons known to their victim." Those among you who are married -- can you really conceive of murdering your husband or wife? Between 1500 and 2000 Americans do just that, every year.

We are a scared nation of people -- scared to take a walk at night, scared to drive through certain parts of town, scared to stop and help a person in trouble. Some of you ladies are scared to be alone anywhere, any time, and justifiably so. Over half the homes in our country have guns for protection -- that's at least 50 million guns -- and what for? To protect us from ourselves.

And let's not forget the unseen but ever-present influence of organized crime. "The Godfather" may have been fiction, but it was fiction based on seamy, grisly fact. There is in fact a Mafia, a Cosa Nostra -- a multi-billion dollar industry living like a parasite

off our society. The underworld makes \$7 billion annually, just from illegal gambling enterprises -- and there's no way of knowing the size of its assets from narcotics and other illegitimate interests. And the chilling truth is, there seems to be almost nothing we can do about this national menace. Of 967 gangland murders committed in Chicago over a 45-year span, two have been solved. You heard right -- two murders out of 967 have been solved. So thus we see the grim fruits of crime in America today: it saps our economy (at the rate of almost \$100 million a day), it frustrates our law enforcement agencies, it assaults and murders men, women and children, and it breeds distrust, suspicion, and fear among all of us.

Standards of Morality

Now let's consider the ever-changing moral standards in America. The moral revolution in this country has resulted in considerably more individual freedom for you and me. But it has also resulted in one million illegal abortions every year, millions of homes torn apart by unfaithful marriage partners, and general mass confusion about the meaning and function of sex. We may be liberated from the old Puritan and Victorian mores, but you have to wonder if it's worth it when hundreds of thousands of illegitimate children are coming into the world each year in our country.

Let's look briefly at one of the fruits of our sexual liberation: venereal disease. Last year Newsweek published a chilling cover story entitled, "VD: The Epidemic." They revealed that, in Los Angeles, one of five high schoolers will have contracted syphilis or gonorrhea before they graduate. And if that's not bad enough, two

years ago 700 cases of VD were reported in children under 14 years of age. First swelling and a rash, then open sores, later possible sterility, paralysis, blindness, or insanity -- not to mention the dangers of deformity and death to unborn babies. The picture of someone you love suffering in such a horrible way should be enough to cause us to look for the cause of this plague which is reaching epidemic proportions. Newsweek concluded that the root cause, according to most public health officials, is (quote) "the three P's -- the Pill, promiscuity, and permissiveness."

But friends, these are all only symptoms of our real sexual problems. We are experiencing a nationwide sexual identity crisis, described by clinical psychologist Rollo May as "so much sex and so little meaning." I suppose this is the natural result, when you prostitute your personal dignity by giving to anyone what God intended you to reserve for one special someone. The high priest of hedonism, Hugh Hefner, has brought to our country a new religion built on the principle of pleasure -- the tragic consequence of which is that people are treated like things -- objects of selfish personal gratification. It's this philosophy, under the guise of freedom and sophistication, that has bred the insensitivity that wrecks marriages and the irresponsibility that deserts or kills unwanted children.

Racism

Finally, let's look briefly at racism -- a spirit that spawns hatred and civil disorder, and stands in direct opposition to the ideals of both Christianity and American democracy. In 1967, this sickness resulted in racial crises in dozens of our cities -- millions

of dollars' worth of property and merchandise were destroyed, but far worse, people were destroyed: 83 persons -- men and women, black and white, innocent and guilty. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders concluded after long and careful study of these incidents: "White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II."

Now you may say, "I'm no racist -- I've never done anything that would cause a race riot." But as Dr. James M. Jones has pointed out in his book Prejudice and Racism, racism begins very innocently, first with the simple premise that one race is inherently superior to another. Consider what one man has written:

Everything we admire on this earth today -- science and art, technology and inventions -- is only the creative product of a few peoples and originally perhaps of one race. On them depends the existence of this whole culture. If they perish, the beauty of this earth will sink into the grave with them.

You might have heard words to this effect at a Ku Klux Klan meeting, or across many backyard fences, or even in some pulpits a few years ago. But the fact is that these particular words were written by the man who gave us Mein Kampf and World War II, the man who gassed women and burned babies in the name of racial superiority. Now Hitler was a power-crazed maniac, but the awful reality is that many respectable Americans, quite in their right minds, have perpetuated some of these same warped ethnic attitudes.

Whether you're a Klansman, or a Panther, or just good old Joe Doe, it's time that we honestly confront this problem of racism with more than just pseudo-liberal, tokenistic statements and programs.

For, unless we do, we could conceivably find ourselves involved in a racial civil war of the dimensions of the religious civil war that is destroying Northern Ireland right now. Perhaps it won't happen in our generation, but do you want to leave for your children a legacy of hatred and discrimination that could erupt in bloodshed and violence on a national scale?

Conclusion

So, in summary, these are three social revolutions -- crime, moral standards, and racism -- that threaten to disintegrate the very fabric of our culture. If you think that I'm just one isolated alarmist, consider the warning of the famous historian, Arnold Toynbee. He pointed out that, of the last 22 great world civilizations, 19 crumbled when they reached the state of moral decay that the United States is in -- and he made that frightening assessment almost ten years ago.

Listeners, our only hope for the future lies in a reevaluation of the value system that our troubled society clings to. Let's reconsider the Christian principles which teach that the man who serves his fellow man is the true national hero, not the sexual superman or the "liberal" bigot; which state emphatically that sex is a beautifully intimate act of love to be shared by two persons who have given themselves only to each other in their sacred marriage relationship; which demand that all men be accorded the personal dignity that is theirs as creations of the same God, who looks on men's hearts and not their skin color.

Or, we may choose the ostrich approach to these crises, conveniently burying our heads in the sand to obscure the murders, the rapes, the riots, and the venereal disease -- because those are the bad things that happen to other people. Please don't wait until it happens to your neighbor, or to your husband, or to your little sister, before you open your eyes to what's going on around you. Please give the God who created this world a chance to make it a better place through your life. The choice is yours.

Low Fear Message

It was the best of time, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the spring of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

Charles Dickens' description of 19th century England in A Tale of Two Cities could well be applied to these paradoxical times.

Though science and technology are curing humanity's diseases and introducing new conveniences daily, individual members of society are still experiencing the same old anxieties and insecurities. Mass communications provide the most sophisticated media ever available, yet conversation with men on the moon is often more easily accomplished than conversation between next door neighbors. During this time of social, political, and moral change, Modern Man seems to be making a move away from supernatural, religious interests, and toward individual, secular interests. In order to understand some of the consequences and implications of this age of rapid change in America, it should prove valuable to examine three particular areas in which revolutionary changes have taken place. Those American revolutions are (1) crime, (2) standards of morality, and (3) racism.

Crime

Consider first the serious problem of crime in America. The crime rate seems to be increasing steadily every year, both in terms of crimes against property and those against persons. The high incidence of crime is not wholly attributable to the "criminal element"

about which movies are made and books written. Prisons and juvenile training schools are crowded with over a million inmates, many of whom were once quite ordinary citizens. And crime is certainly not just a national phenomenon, for, as a special law enforcement study group concluded recently, "Crime is a worldwide problem."

One of the chief causes of the proliferating crime problem is what social psychologists would call a breakdown in interpersonal relationships, a loss of a sense of neighborliness and community. This is evident in the fact that most crimes against persons involve individuals who know each other, or are even related to each other. In 1965, at least 1500 marriage partners took the lives of their own mates. Thus the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice was prompted to report about crime: "Few domestic social problems more seriously threaten our welfare or exact a greater toll on our resources."

But perhaps the strongest criminal influence in America has yet to be mentioned -- organized crime, particularly the Mafia, or Cosa Nostra. Few business enterprises are more successful than this illegal one, said to gross billions of dollars annually. A Senate subcommittee report estimated that Crime, Inc. receives an annual revenue of over seven billion dollars from illicit gambling operations alone. Furthermore, these illegal profits, plus those from narcotics, loan-sharking, and other sources, are used to finance legitimate business interests -- and so the spiral of increasing profits goes on. The syndicate has certainly been the focal point of a good deal of public attention with the publishing of

The Godfather, The Valachi Papers, and other works factual and fictional. Nonetheless, America's law enforcement agencies have not yet been able to take decisive steps in dissolving the vast, sophisticated network of organized crime that has for years functioned so efficiently and so profitably in this country.

The real menace of crime to the American society, however, is not to be measured in dollars and cents, or even in the numbers of assaults and deaths. Rather, the all-encompassing effect of crime is the fear and insecurity that all Americans know -- a fear that not only prevents a man or woman from walking alone at night, but also breeds a suspicion and callousness toward others that prevent warm personal relationships, or even casual, friendly ones; a fear that accounts in part for the presence of 50 million guns in over half of America's homes. Crime's most cruel blow is that it drives Americans to find "security" in seclusion -- and thus it segments society and keeps most of its citizens at arm's length from one another.

Standards of Morality

The ever-changing standards of morality represent a second American revolution worthy of some consideration today. The upshot of the changes in moral standards during this century has been considerably more individual freedom and social tolerance. But with this liberation from the old Puritan and Victorian mores has come a concurrent breakdown in the stability of the American home and general mass confusion about the meaning and function of sex. America has loosed her religious and social restraints on human sexuality, and seen as a consequence a great deal of individual irresponsibility in handling this new freedom.

In their quest for greater sexual fulfillment and happiness, Americans have instead found a need for more illegal abortions than ever before -- over a million a year. Newsweek reported last year that venereal disease is the most common communicable disease in the country, with the number of cases each year exceeding that of strep throat, measles, mumps, and tuberculosis combined. And Newsweek went on to say, "To a good many public-health officials, the root causes of the VD epidemic can be crisply summarized by the 'three P's -- the Pill, promiscuity, and permissiveness.'"

But again, surveys and figures only serve to point out the symptoms -- and not the underlying causes -- of the problem at hand. It has been observed by many who study human behavior that despite the great advancements of this culture, it is nonetheless suffering from a nationwide identity crisis. The principle of sex-for-pleasure -- only that Hugh Hefner and others have built financial empires upon, too often results in the treatment of persons as things, objects of momentary gratification. Any moral principle that violates human dignity and exploits the personality at its deepest level can never lead ultimately to physical and emotional satisfaction. The problem that now confronts this nation, to quote the well-known clinical psychologist Rollo May, is "so much sex and so little meaning."

Racism

Finally, consider the revolution of racism, a spirit that results in discrimination and disorder, and stands in direct opposition to the ideals of both Christianity and American democracy. In

1967, racial incidents were touched off in dozens of cities -- millions of dollars' worth of property and merchandise were destroyed, and many Americans died needlessly. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders concluded after long and careful study of these incidents: "White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II."

Dr. James M. Jones in his book Prejudice and Racism has defined racism as a prejudicial attitude directed "against a racial group defined as inferior, by individuals and institutions with the intentional or unintentional support of the whole culture." He observed that racism in America is not for the most part perpetuated by the overtly-bigoted hater of all other races and ethnic groups. Rather, it is most often passed on by a much larger group -- those subtly-prejudiced individuals who quietly cling to the belief that their race is superior, and shun contact with all persons who are not "their kind." So it is not the Klansman or the Panther, but rather the middle-class John Doe who most influences America's racial viewpoint.

Many token statements and programs have come forth in recent years in response to racial problems. But one of the most valuable suggestions for racial reconciliation comes from a group of psychologists who have concluded, after considerable research and observation, that American inter-group competition is largely responsible for the perpetuation of racial conflict, and that only by working together toward a greater common goal can blacks and whites mend their differences.

Conclusion

So, in summary, these are three social revolutions -- crime, moral standards, and racism -- three revolutions that indicate a serious deterioration of interpersonal relationships in America. It is time to take a long, serious look at these troubled times, to determine why there is so much unrest within the cities, within the homes, and within men themselves. For perhaps the revolutionary changes in the American value system have not all been for the better. Perhaps some of the philosophies that have been heralded as sophisticated and liberating, have rather been depersonalizing and irresponsible.

It is the purpose and hope of this message to recommend that society reconsider the principles of Christianity that speak to the needs of modern man -- principles which teach that the individual who devotes himself to the service of others is the true national hero, not the Hefner prototype or the "liberal" bigot; principles which state emphatically that sex is a beautifully intimate act of love to be shared by two persons who have given themselves only to each other in their sacred marriage relationship; principles which demand that all men be accorded the personal dignity that is theirs as creations of the same God, who looks on men's hearts and not their skin color.

Profound social upheavals like the ones mentioned today will not work themselves out; neither is there promise that science and technology will come up with any original new solutions. For these are problems that can only be solved by mending relationships --

between man and God, and between man and man. If mankind will only follow the direction of the God who created this world, perhaps the wounds caused by man's inhumanity to man can someday be healed.

APPENDIX B

PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Student Attitude Questionnaire

This questionnaire is an attempt to get the attitudes of LSU students toward contemporary issues and toward themselves. We are interested only in your agreement and disagreement with the following statements, and not in the truth or falsity of them. Please respond to every question with the answer that best applies to you.

Please read every statement and respond to it in terms of your personal agreement or disagreement, according to the following plan:

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided, or Equally agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	4	5

Please circle the letter indicating your choice:

Statements about social issues

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Large fortunes should be taxed fairly heavily over and above income taxes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Individuals who are against churches and religions should not be allowed to teach in colleges. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Both public and private universities and colleges should get generous aid from both state and federal governments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Science and society would both be better off if scientists took no part in politics. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Society should be quicker to throw out old ideas and traditions and to adopt new thinking and customs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. To ensure adequate care of the sick, we need to change radically the present system of privately controlled medical care. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided, or Equally agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
7. If civilization is to survive, there must be a turning back to religion.	1	2	3	4	5
8. A first consideration in any society is the protection of property rights.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Government ownership and management of utilities leads to bureaucracy and inefficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
10. If the United States takes part in any sort of world organization, we should be sure that we lose none of our power and influence.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Funds for school construction should come from state and federal government loans at no interest or very low interest.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Inherited racial characteristics play more a part in the achievement of individuals and groups than is generally known.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Our present economic system should be reformed so that profits are replaced by reimbursements for useful work.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Public enterprises like railroads should not make profits; they are entitled to fares sufficient to enable them to pay only a fair interest on the actual cash capital they have invested.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Government laws and regulations should be such as first to ensure the prosperity of business since the prosperity of all depends on the prosperity of business.	1	2	3	4	5

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided, or Equally agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree			
1	2	3	4	5			
<hr/>							
16.	All individuals who are intellectually capable of benefiting from it should get college education, at public expense if necessary.		1	2	3	4	5
17.	The well-being of a nation depends mainly on its industry and business.		1	2	3	4	5
18.	True democracy is limited in the United States because of the special privileges enjoyed by business and industry.		1	2	3	4	5
19.	The gradual social ownership of industry needs to be encouraged if we are ever to cure some of the ills of our society.		1	2	3	4	5
20.	There should be no government interference with business and trade.		1	2	3	4	5
21.	Some sort of religious education should be given in the public schools.		1	2	3	4	5
22.	Unemployment insurance is an inalienable right of the working man.		1	2	3	4	5
23.	Individuals with the ability and foresight to earn and accumulate wealth should have the right to enjoy that wealth without government interference and regulations.		1	2	3	4	5
24.	The United Nations should be wholeheartedly supported by all of us.		1	2	3	4	5

Statements about religious issues

1.	Religious faith is better than logic for solving life's important problems.		1	2	3	4	5
2.	I don't think it makes any difference if one is a Christian so long as he has good will for others		1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided, or Equally agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
3. I often think that I couldn't do without my religion.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I think there are many men in history as great as Jesus.	1	2	3	4	5
6. God is constantly with us.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Christ's simple message of concern for your fellow man has been twisted by superstitious mysticism.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I attend church to worship God with devotion and to gain guidance for everyday life.	1	2	3	4	5
9. A person can be happy and enjoy life without believing in God.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I believe that eternal life is a gift of God to those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Man can solve all his important problems without help from a Supreme Being.	1	2	3	4	5
12. It is through the righteousness of Jesus Christ and not because of our own works that we are made righteous before God.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I don't think prayers go above the ceiling of the room in which they are uttered.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am sometimes very conscious of the presence of God.	1	2	3	4	5
15. "God" is an abstract concept roughly equivalent to the concept "Nature."	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided, or Equally agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
16. I think that the Bible is full of errors, misconceptions, and contradictions.				1 2 3 4 5	
17. If I were without my religion and my understanding of God, I would have little left in life.				1 2 3 4 5	
18. I think God is revealed in every person who acts and feels unselfishly.				1 2 3 4 5	
19. I believe that God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.				1 2 3 4 5	
20. I believe that man working and thinking together can build a just society without superhuman help.				1 2 3 4 5	
21. The Bible in many ways has held back and retarded human progress.				1 2 3 4 5	
22. I think of God as present wherever there is genuine beauty.				1 2 3 4 5	
23. I am not a religious person.				1 2 3 4 5	
24. Science makes me doubt that man has a soul.				1 2 3 4 5	
25. When in doubt, it is best to stop and ask God what to do.				1 2 3 4 5	
26. Christ was not divine but his teachings and the example set by his life are important.				1 2 3 4 5	
27. I believe that following the gospel of Christ is the only way for mankind to be saved.				1 2 3 4 5	
28. God exists in all of us.				1 2 3 4 5	

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided, or Equally agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
29. I think that God's purposes are best shown by Christ.				1 2 3 4 5	
30. God created man separate and distinct from animals.				1 2 3 4 5	
31. I can take religion or leave it.				1 2 3 4 5	
32. I think that Jesus was born of a Virgin.				1 2 3 4 5	
33. I think that God may possibly have created the world, but he does not show Himself or interfere in it today.				1 2 3 4 5	
34. I think there is no life after death.				1 2 3 4 5	
35. As science advances, religion will fade out in importance and eventually no religion will be needed.				1 2 3 4 5	
36. A person should follow his own conscience -- not prayer -- in deciding right and wrong.				1 2 3 4 5	
37. I do not believe that there is a Heaven and a Hell.				1 2 3 4 5	
38. God is very real to me.				1 2 3 4 5	
39. I don't believe that history reveals the working out of God's plan.				1 2 3 4 5	
40. Because of his presence we can know that God exists.				1 2 3 4 5	

Statements about yourself

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I'd like it if I could find someone who would tell me how to solve my personal problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided, or Equally agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
2. I don't question my worth as a person, even if I think others do.	1	2	3	4	5
3. When people say nice things about me, I find it difficult to believe they really mean it.	1	2	3	4	5
4. If there is any criticism or anyone says anything about me, I just can't take it.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I don't say much at social affairs because I'm afraid that people will criticize me or laugh if I say the wrong thing.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I realize that I'm not living very effectively, but I just don't believe that I've got it in me to use my energies in better ways.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I look on most of the feelings and impulses I have toward people as being quite natural and acceptable.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Something inside me just won't let me be satisfied with any job I've done.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel different from other people. I'd like to have a feeling of security that comes from knowing that I'm not too different from others.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I'm afraid for people that I like to find out what I'm really like, for fear they would be disappointed in me.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am seldom bothered by feelings of inferiority.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Because of other people, I haven't been able to achieve as much as I should have.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided, or Equally agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
13. In order to get along and be liked, I tend to be what people expect me to be rather than anything else.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I seem to have a real inner strength in handling things. I'm on a pretty solid foundation and it makes me pretty sure of myself.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I feel self-conscious when I'm with people who have a superior position to mine in business or at school.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I think I'm neurotic or something.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Very often I don't try to be friendly with people because I think they won't like me.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I feel that I'm a person of worth, on an equal plane with others.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I can't avoid feeling guilty about the way I feel toward certain people in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I'm not afraid of meeting new people. I feel that I'm a worthwhile person and there's no reason why they should dislike me.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I sort of only half-believe in myself.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I feel confident that I can do something about the problems that may arise in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I guess I put on a show to impress people. I know I'm not the person I pretend to be.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided, or Equally agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
24. I do not worry or condemn myself if other people pass judgment against me.				1 2 3 4 5	
25. I don't feel very normal, but I want to feel normal.				1 2 3 4 5	
26. I have a tendency to sidestep my problems.				1 2 3 4 5	
27. Even when people do think well of me, I feel sort of guilty because I know I must be fooling them.				1 2 3 4 5	
28. I feel that I'm on the same level as other people and that helps to establish good relations with them.				1 2 3 4 5	
29. I live too much by other people's standards.				1 2 3 4 5	
30. If I didn't always have such hard luck, I'd accomplish much more than I have.				1 2 3 4 5	

Thank you for your cooperation. In order that we might obtain an overall profile on the students completing this questionnaire, would you please provide us with this information about yourself:

Age _____ Sex _____ Major Field _____

Political Affiliation _____

Religious Affiliation _____

POSTTEST QUESTIONNAIRE

LISTENER RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

I. What did you think of this presentation?

Please respond to each of these statements by entering the appropriate letter in the space provided, according to the following scale:

- 1 -- I strongly agree
- 2 -- I agree
- 3 -- I am undecided; or, I both agree and disagree
- 4 -- I disagree
- 5 -- I strongly disagree

- _____ 1. I can go along with much of what the speaker said.
- _____ 2. Sometimes it was difficult to pay attention to what the speaker was saying.
- _____ 3. This message seemed aimed at frightening me.
- _____ 4. Most or all of this message was interesting to me.
- _____ 5. I did not agree with the speaker's way of presenting his material.
- _____ 6. The conclusions that the speaker from his evidence were fair ones.
- _____ 7. Listening to this message was a waste of my time.
- _____ 8. The speaker's voice was pleasing.
- _____ 9. The speaker seemed to exhibit a spirit of good will toward his listeners.
- _____ 10. I think the speaker may have overstated his case.
- _____ 11. Personally, I was offended by this message.
- _____ 12. This message increased my concern for some of the problems discussed.

II. How much do you remember from the message?

Please fill in these blanks as best you can, based on what you remember from the content of the message.

The quotation that introduced the message was from Charles Dickens' book _____. The point of the quotation was that 19th century England, much like today, was a time of _____.

Guns are said to be present in approximately _____% of the homes in this country. The strongest criminal influence in America today is _____. \$7,000,000,000 is thought to be earned yearly from this illegal activity: _____.

Newsweek reported that this disease -- _____ -- is reaching epidemic proportions in America, and concluded that the root causes for it, according to public health officials, are the "3 P's": the Pill, _____, and _____.

Serious racial incidents occurred all over the United States in the year _____. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders concluded that the primary reason for the racial problems that flared in our cities was _____.

Christianity contends that this man is the true national hero: _____.

The central recommendation of this message was _____.

_____.

III. Would you please provide us with this information about the individuals we are asking to respond to this message?

Sex _____ Marital status _____

Age _____ Race _____

Your religious preference _____

Your occupation _____
(If you are a student, please include your major.)

IV. Additional comments.

Was there anything in particular about this message that you liked or disliked?

Thank you very much for your cooperation and assistance.

VITA

Kenneth Ray Durham, Jr., was born in Abilene, Texas on March 21, 1948, the son of Kenneth R. and Mary Louise Durham. He graduated from Wade Hampton High School of Greenville, South Carolina, in 1966. In 1970 he received the Bachelor of Arts degree, magna cum laude, in speech education from David Lipscomb College, Nashville, Tennessee. In the fall of 1970 he entered the graduate school of Louisiana State University as an NDEA Fellow, and was granted the Master of Arts degree in speech in December, 1972. In August, 1973, he was married to the former Cathy Crawford of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He presently holds a teaching assistantship in the Department of Speech at Louisiana State University, and is a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in speech. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi.